Encounter

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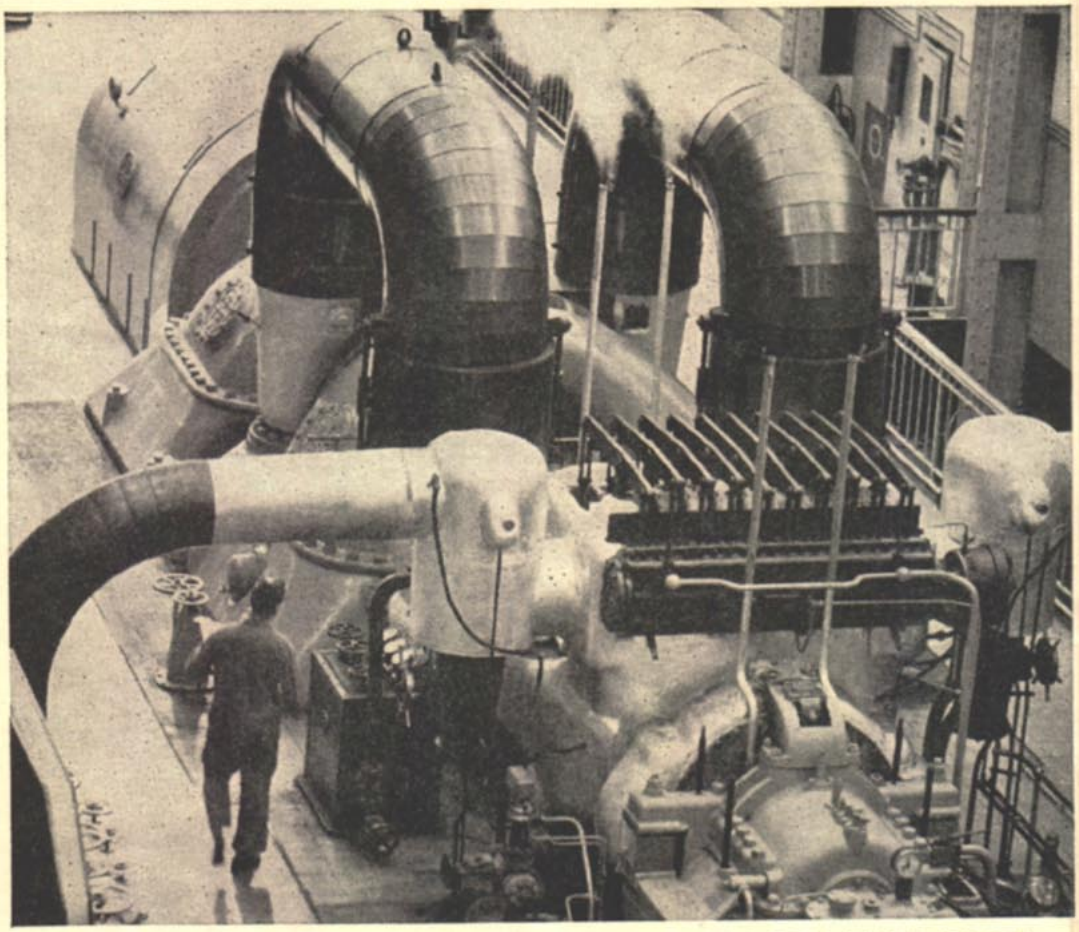

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J. Robert Oppenheimer

On Science and Culture

WE LIVE in an unusual world, marked by very great and irreversible changes that occur within the span of a man's life. We live in a time where our knowledge and understanding of the world of nature grows wider and deeper at an unparalleled rate; and where the problems of applying this knowledge to man's needs and hopes are new, and only a little illuminated by our past history.

Indeed it has always, in traditional societies, been the great function of culture to keep things rather stable, quiet, and unchanging. It has been the function of tradition to assimilate one epoch to another, one episode to another, even one year to another. It has been the function of culture to bring out meaning, by pointing to the constant or recurrent traits of human life, which in easier days one talked about as the eternal verities.

In the most primitive societies, if one believes the anthropologists, the principal function of ritual, religion, of culture is, in fact, almost to stop change. It is to provide for the social organism what life provides in such a magic way for living organisms, a kind of homeostasis, an ability to remain intact, to respond only very little to the obvious convulsions and alterations in the world around.

To-day, culture and tradition have assumed a very different intellectual and social purpose. The principal function of the most vital and living traditions to-day is precisely to provide the instruments of rapid change. There are many things which go together to bring about this alteration in man's life; but probably the decisive one is science itself. I will use that word as broadly as I know, meaning the natural sciences, meaning the historical sciences, meaning all those matters on which men can converse objectively with each other. I shall not continually repeat the distinction between science as an effort to find out about the world and understand it, on the one hand, and science, in its applications in technology, as an effort to do something useful with the knowledge so acquired. But certain care is called for, because, if we call this the scientific age, we make more than one kind of oversimplification. When we talk about science to-day, we are likely to think of the biologist with his microscope or the physicist with his cyclotron; but almost certainly a great deal that is not now the subject of successful study will later come to be. I think we probably to-day have under cultivation only a small part of the terrain which will be natural for the sciences a century from now. I think of the enormously rapid growth in many parts of biology, and of the fact, ominous but not without hope, that man is a part of nature and very open to study.

The reason for this great change from a slowly moving, almost static world, to the world we live in, is the cumulative character, the firmness, the givenness of what has been learned about nature. It is true that it is transcended when one goes into other parts of experience. What is true on the scale of the inch and the centimeter may not be true on the scale of a billion light-years; it may not be true either of the scale of a one hundred billionth of a centimetre; but it stays true where it was proven. It is fixed. Thus everything that is found out is added to what was known before, enriches it, and does not have to be done over again. This essentially cumulative irreversible character of learning things is the hallmark of science.

THIS MEANS that in man's history the sciences make changes which cannot be wished away and cannot be undone. Let me give two quite different examples. There is

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much talk about getting rid of atomic bombs. I like that talk; but we must not fool ourselves. The world will not be the same, no matter what we do with atomic bombs, because the knowledge of how to make them cannot be exorcised. It is there; and all our arrangements for living in a new age must bear in mind its omnipresent virtual presence, and the fact that one cannot change that. A different example: we can never have again the delusions about the centrality and importance of our physical habitat, now that we know something of where the earth is in the solar system, and know that there are hundreds of billions of suns in our galaxy, and hundreds of billions of galaxies within reach of the great telescopes of the world. We can never again base the dignity of man's life on the special character in space and time of the place where he happens to live.

These are irreversible changes; so it is that the cumulative character gives a paradigm of something which is, in other respects, very much more subject to question: the idea of human progress. One cannot doubt that in the sciences the direction of growth is progress. This is true both of the knowledge of fact, the understanding of nature, and the knowledge of skill, of technology, of learning how to do things. When one applies this to the human situation, and complains that we make great progress in automation and computing and space research but no comparable moral progress, this involves a total misunderstanding of the difference between the two kinds of progress. I do not mean that moral progress is impossible; but it is not, in any sense, automatic. Moral regress, as we have seen in our day, is just as possible. Scientific regress is not compatible with the continued practice of science.

IT IS, OF COURSE, TRUE, and we pride ourselves on it that it is true, that science is quite international, and is the same (with minor differences of emphasis) in Japan, France, the United States, Russia. But culture is not international; indeed I am one of those who hope that, in a certain sense, it never quite will be, that the influence of our past, of our history, which is for different reasons and different peoples quite different, will make itself felt and not be lost in total homogeneity.

I cannot subscribe to the view that science and culture are co-extensive, that they are the same thing with different names; and I cannot subscribe to the view that science is something useful, but essentially unrelated to culture. I think that we live in a time which has few historical parallels, that there are practical problems of human institutions, their obsolescence and their inadequacy, problems of the mind and spirit which, if not more difficult than ever before, are different, and difficult. I shall be dealing with some traits of the sciences which contribute to the difficulty, and may here give a synopsis of what they are. They have to do with the question of why the scientific revolution happened when it did; with the characteristic growth of the sciences: with their characteristic internal structure: with the relation of discovery in the sciences to the general ideas of man in matters which are not precisely related to the sciences: with freedom and necessity in the sciences, and the question of the creative and the open character of science, its infinity: and with what direction we might try to follow in bringing coherence and order to our cultural life, in doing what it is proper for a group of intellectuals, of artists, of philosophers, teachers, scientists, statesmen to do to help refashion the sensibility and the institutions of this world, which need re-fashioning if we are at all to survive.

IT IS NOT a simple question to answer why the scientific revolution occurred when it did. It started, as all serious historians would agree, in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, and was very slow at first. No great culture has been free of curiosity and reflection, of contemplation and thought. "To know the causes of things" is something that serious men have always wanted, a quest that serious societies have sustained. No great culture has been free of inventive genius. If we think of the culture of Greece, and the following Hellenistic and Roman period, it is particularly puzzling that the scientific revolution did not occur then. The Greeks discovered something without which our contemporary world would not be what it is: standards of rigour, the idea of proof, the idea of logical necessity, the idea that one thing implies another. Without that, science is very nearly impossible, for unless there is a quasi-rigid structure of implication and necessity, then if something turns out not to be what one expected, one will have no way of finding out where the wrong point is: one has no way of correcting himself, of finding the error. But this is something that the Greeks had very early in their history. They were curious and inventive; they did not experiment in the scale of modern

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days, but they did many experiments; they had as we have only recently learned to appreciate a very high degree of technical and technological sophistication. They could make very subtle and complicated instruments; and they did, though they did not write much about it. Possibly the Greeks did not make the scientific revolution because of some flaw in communication. They were a small society, and it may be that there were not quite enough people involved.

In a matter of history, we cannot assign a unique cause, precisely because the event itself is unique; you cannot test, to see if you have it right. I think that the best guess is that it took something that was not present in Chinese civilisation, that was wholly absent in Indian civilisation, and absent also from Greco-Roman civilisation. It needed an idea of progress, not limited to better understanding for this idea the Greeks had. It took an idea of progress which has more to do with the human condition, which is well expressed by the second half of the famous Christian dichotomy—faith and works; the notion that the betterment of man's condition, his civility, had meaning; that we all had a responsibility to it, a duty to it, and to man. I think that it was when this basic idea of man's condition, which supplements the other worldly aspects of religion, was fortified and fructified between the 13th and 15th centuries by the re-discovery of the ancient world's scientists, philosophers, and mathematicians, that there was the beginning of the scientific age. By the 17th century there were a handful of men involved in improving human knowledge, or "useful knowledge" as the phrases went, so that new societies like the Royal Society and the Academy were formed, where people could talk to each other and bring to the prosecution of science that indispensable element of working together, of communication, of correcting the other fellow's errors and admiring the other fellow's skills, thus creating the first truly scientific communities.

JUST BEFORE Newton, Hobbes wrote:

> The Sciences are small power; because not eminent; and therefore, not acknowledged in any man, nor one at all, but in a few; and in them, but of a few things. For Science is of that nature, as none can understand it to be, but such as is good measure have attayned it.
>
> Arts of publique use, as Fortification, making of Engines, and other Instruments of War; because they conferre to Defence, and Victory, are Power.

It was the next century that put science in a context of fraternity, even of universal brotherhood. It encouraged a political view which was egalitarian, permissive, pluralistic, liberal—everything for which the word "democratic" is to-day justly and rightly used. The result is that the scientific world of to-day is also a very large one: an open world in which, of course, not everybody does everything, in which not everybody is a scientist or a prime minister, but in which we fight very hard against arbitrary exclusion of people from any works, any deliberation, any discourse, any responsibility for which their talents and their interests suit them. The result is that we face our new problems, created by the practical consequences of technology, and the great intellectual consequences of science itself, in the context of a world of two or three billion people, an enormous society for which human institutions were not really ever designed. We are facing a world in which growth is characteristic, not just of the sciences themselves, but of the economy, of technology, of all human institutions; no one can open a daily paper without seeing the consequences.

ONE CAN MEASURE scientific growth in a number of ways, but it is important not to mistake things. The excellence of the individual scientist does not change much with time. His knowledge and his power does, but not the high quality that makes him great. We do not look to anyone to be better than Kepler or Newton, any more than we look to anyone to be better than Sophocles, or to any doctrine to be better than the gospel according to St. Matthew. Yet one can measure things, and it has been done. One can measure how many people work on scientific questions: one can count them. One can notice how much is published.

These two criteria show a doubling of scientific knowledge in every ten years. Casimir calculated that if the *Physical Review* continued to grow as rapidly as it has between 1945 and 1960, it would weigh more than the earth during the next century. In fifteen years, the volume of chemical abstracts has quadrupled; in biology the changes are faster still. To-day, if you talk about scientists and mean by that people who have devoted their lives to the acquisition and application of new knowledge, then 93 per cent of us are still alive. This enormously rapid growth, sustained over two centuries, means, of course, that no man learned as

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a boy more than a small fraction in his own field of what he ought to know as a grown man.

THERE ARE SEVERAL points to keep in mind. One would naturally think that if we are publishing so much, it must be trivial. I think that this is not true: any scientific community with sane people would protect itself against that: because we have to read what is published. The argument not to permit the accumulation of trivial, unimportant things which are not really new, which do not add to what was known before, is overwhelming.

The second point is that one may say that every new thing renders what was known before uninteresting, that one can forget as rapidly as one learns. That is in part true: whenever there is a great new understanding, a great new element of order, a new theory, or a new law of nature, then much that before had to be remembered in isolation becomes connected and becomes, to some extent, implied and simplified. Yet one cannot forget what went before, because usually the meaning of what is discovered in 1962 is to be found in terms of things that were discovered in 1955 or 1950 or earlier. These are the things in terms of which the new discoveries are made, the origins of the instruments that give us the new discoveries, the origins of the concepts in terms of which they are discovered, the origins of the language and the tradition.

A third point: if one looks to the future of something that doubles every ten years, there must come a time when it stops, just as *The Physical Review* cannot weigh more than the earth. We know that this will saturate, and probably at a level very much higher than to-day; there will come a time when the rate of growth of science is not such that in every ten years the amount that is known is doubled; but the amount that is added to knowledge then will be far greater than it is to-day. For this rate of growth suggests that, just as the professional must, if he is to remain professional, live a life of continuous study, so we may find a clue here also to the more general behaviour of the intellectual with regard to his own affairs, and those of his colleagues in somewhat different fields. In the most practical way a man will have some choice: he may choose to continue to learn about his own field in an intimate, detailed, knowledgeable way, so that he knows what there is to know about it. But then the field will not be very wide. His knowledge will be highly partial of science as a whole, but very intimate and very complete of his own field. He may, on the other hand, choose to know generally, superficially a good deal about what goes on in science, but without competence, without mastery, without intimacy, without depth. The reason for emphasising this is that the cultural values of the life of science almost all lie in the intimate view: here are the new techniques, the hard lessons, the real choices, the great disappointments, the great discoveries.

ALL SCIENCES grow out of common sense, out of curiosity, observation, reflection. One starts by refining one's observation and one's words, and by exploring and pushing things a little further than they occur in ordinary life. In this novelty there are surprises; one revises the way one thinks about things to accommodate the surprises; then the old way of thinking gets to be so cumbersome and inappropriate that one realises that there is a big change called for, and one re-creates one's way of thinking about this part of nature.

Through all this one learns to say what one has done, what one has found, and to be patient and wait for others to see if they find the same things, and to reduce, to the point where it really makes no further difference, the normally overpoweringly vital element of ambiguity in human speech. We live by being ambiguous, by not settling things because they do not have to be settled, by suggesting more than one thing because their co-presence in the mind may be a source of beauty. But in talking about science one may be as ambiguous as ever until we come to the heart of it. Then we tell a fellow just what we did in terms that are intelligible to him, because he has been schooled to understand them, and we tell him just what we found and just how we did it. If he does not understand us, we go to visit him and help him; and if he still does not understand us, we go back home and do it over again. This is the way in which the firmness and solidity of science is established.

HOW THEN DOES IT GO? In studying the different parts of nature, one explores with different instruments, explores different objects, and one gets a branching of what at one time had been common talk, common sense. Each branch develops new instruments, ideas, words suitable

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for describing that part of the world of nature. This tree-like structure, all growing from the common trunk of man's common primordial experience, has branches no longer associated with the same question, nor the same words and techniques. The unity of science, apart from the fact that it all has a common origin in man's ordinary life, is not a unity of deriving one part from another, nor of finding an identity between one part and another, between let us say, genetics and topology, to take two impossible examples, where there is indeed some connection.

The unity consists of two things: first and ever more strikingly, an absence of inconsistency. Thus we may talk of life in terms of purpose and adaptation and function, but we have found in living things no tricks played upon the laws of physics and chemistry. We have found and I expect will find a total consistency, and between the different subjects, even as remote as genetics and topology, an occasional sharp mutual relevance. They throw light on each other; they have something to do with each other; often the greatest things in the sciences occur when two different discoveries made in different worlds turn out to have so much in common that they are examples of a still greater discovery.

THE IMAGE is not that of an ordered array of facts in which every one follows somehow from a more fundamental one. It is rather that of a living thing: a tree doing something that trees do not normally do, occasionally having the branches grow together and part again in a great network.

The knowledge that is being increased in this extraordinary way is inherently and inevitably very specialised. It is different for the physicist, the astronomer, the micro-biologist, the mathematician. There are connections: there is this often important mutual relevance. Even in physics, where we fight very hard to keep the different parts of our subject from flying apart (so that one fellow will know one thing and another fellow will know another, and they do not talk to each other), we do not entirely succeed, in spite of a passion for unity which is very strong. The traditions of science are specialised traditions; this is their strength. Their strength is that they use the words, the machinery, the concepts, the theories, that fit their subjects; they are not encumbered by having to try to fit other sorts of things. It is the specialised traditions which give the enormous thrust and power to the scientific experience. This also makes for the problem of teaching and explaining the sciences. When we get to some very powerful general result which illuminates a large part of the world of nature, it is by virtue of its being general in the logical sense, of encompassing an enormous amount of experience in its concepts; and in its terminology it is most highly specialised, almost unintelligible except to the men who have worked in the field. The great laws of physics to-day, which do not describe everything (or we would be out of business) but which underlie almost everything that is ever noticed in ordinary human experience about the physical world, cannot be formulated in terms that can reasonably be defined without a long period of careful schooling. This is comparably true in other subjects.

ONE HAS THEN in these specialisations the professional communities in the various sciences. They are very intimate, work closely together, know each other throughout the world. They are always excited—sometimes jealous but usually pleased—when one member of the community makes a discovery. I think, for instance, that what we now call psychology will one day perhaps be many sciences, that there will be many different specialised communities practising them, who will talk with one another, each in their own profession and in their own way.

These specialised communities, or guilds, are a very moving experience for those who participate. There have been many temptations to see analogues in them for other human activities. One that we hear much discussed is this: "If physicists can work together in countries with different cultures, in countries with different politics, in countries of different religions, even in countries which are politically obviously hostile, is not this a way to bring the world together?"

The specialising habits of the sciences have, to some extent, because of the tricks of universities, been carried over to other work, to philosophy and to the arts. There is technical philosophy which is philosophy as a craft, philosophy for other philosophers, and there is art for the artists and the critics. To my mind, whatever virtues the works have for sharpening professional tools, they are profound misreadings, even profound subversions of the true

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functions of philosophy and art, which are to address themselves to the general common human problem. Not to everybody, but to anybody: not to specialists.

It is clear that one is faced here with formidable problems of communication, of telling people about things. It is an immense job of teaching on all levels, in every sense of the word, never ending.

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN held that the great discoveries in science, coming into the lives of men, affect their attitudes toward their place in life, their views, their philosophy. There is surely some truth in this.*

If discoveries in science are to have an honest effect on human thought and on culture, they have to be understandable. That is likely to be true only in the early period of a science, when it is talking about things which are not too remote from ordinary experience. Some of the great discoveries of this century go under the name of Relativity and Uncertainty, and when we hear these words we may think, "This is the way I felt this morning: I was relatively confused and quite uncertain": this is not at all a notion of what technical points are involved in these great discoveries, or what lessons.

I think that the reason why Darwin's hypothesis had such an impact was, in part, because it was a very simple thing in terms of ordinary life. We cannot talk about the contemporary discovery in biology in such language, or by referring only to things that we have all experienced.

Thus I think that the great effects of the sciences in stimulating and in enriching philosophical life and cultural interests have been necessarily confined to the rather early times in the development of a science. There is another qualification. Discoveries will really only resonate and change the thinking of men when they feed some hope, some need that pre-exists in the society. I think that the real sources of the Enlightenment, fed a little by the scientific events of the time, came in the re-discovery of the classics, of classic political theory, perhaps most of all of the Stoics. The hunger of the Eighteenth Century to believe in the power of reason, to wish to throw off authority, to wish to secularise, to take an optimistic view of man's condition, seized on Newton and his discoveries as an illustration of something which was already deeply believed in quite apart from the law of gravity and the laws of motion. The hunger with which the Nineteenth Century seized on Darwin had very much to do with the increasing awareness of history and change, with the great desire to naturalise man, to put him into the world of nature, which pre-existed long before Darwin and which made him welcome. I have seen an example in this century where the great Danish physicist Niels Bohr found in the quantum theory when it was developed thirty years ago this remarkable trait: it is consistent with describing an atomic system, only much less completely than we can describe large-scale objects. We have a certain choice as to which traits of the atomic system we wish to study and measure and which to let go; but we have not the option of doing them all. This situation, which we all recognise, sustained in Bohr his long-held view of the human condition: that there are mutually exclusive ways of using our words, our minds, our souls, any one of which is open to us, but which cannot be combined: ways as different, for instance, as preparing to act and entering into an introspective search for the reasons for action. This discovery has not, I think, penetrated into general cultural life. I wish it had; it is a good example of something that would be relevant, if only it could be understood.

EINSTEIN ONCE SAID that a physical theory was not determined by the facts of nature, but was a free invention of the human mind. This raises the question of how necessary is the content of science—how much is it something that we are free not to find—how much is it something that could be otherwise? This is, of course, relevant to the question of how we may use the words "objectivity" and "truth." Do we, when we find something, "invent" it or "discover" it?

The fact is, of course, just what one would guess. We are, of course, free in our tradition and in our practice, and to a much more limited extent individually to decide where to look at nature, and how to look at nature, what questions to put, with what instruments and with what purpose. But we are not the least bit free to

* Examples that are usually given include Newton and Darwin. Newton is not a very good example, for when we look at it closely we are struck by the fact that in the sense of the Enlightenment, the sense of a coupling of faith in scientific progress and man's reason with a belief in political progress and the secularisation of human life, Newton himself was in no way a Newtonian. His successors were.

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settle what we find. Man must certainly be free to invent the idea of mass, as Newton did and as it has been refined and re-defined; but having done so, we have not been free to find that the mass of the light quantum or the neutrino is anything but zero. We are free in the start of things. We are free as to how to go about it; but then the rock of what the world is, shapes this freedom with a necessary answer. That is why ontological interpretations of the word "objective" have seemed useless, and why we use the word to describe the clarity, the lack of ambiguity, the effectiveness of the way we can tell each other about what we have found.

THUS in the sciences, total statements like those that involve the word "all," with no qualifications, are hardly ever likely to occur. In every investigation and extension of knowledge we are involved in an action; in every action we are involved in a choice; and in every choice we are involved in a loss, the loss of that we did not do. We find this in the simplest situations. We find this in perception, where the possibility of perceiving is co-extensive with our ignoring many things that are going on. We find it in speech where the possibility of understandable speech lies in paying no attention to a great deal that is in the air, among the sound waves, in the general scene. Meaning is always attained at the cost of leaving things out. We find it in the idea of complementarity here in a sharp form as a recognition that the attempt to make one sort of observation on an atomic system forecloses others. We have freedom of choice, but we have no escape from the fact that doing some things must leave out others.

In practical terms, this means, of course, that our knowledge is finite and never all-encompassing. There is always much that we miss, much that we cannot be aware of because the very act of learning, of ordering, of finding unity and meaning, the very power to talk about things means that we leave out a great deal.

Ask the question: *Would another civilisation based on life on another planet very similar to ours in its ability to sustain life have the same physics?* One has no idea whether they would have the same physics or not. We might be talking about quite different questions. This makes ours an open world without end. I had a Sanskritist friend in California who used to say mockingly that, if science were any good, it should be much easier to be an educated man now than it was a generation ago. That is because he thought the world was closed.

THE THINGS THAT MAKE US choose one set of questions, one branch of enquiry rather than another are embodied in scientific traditions. In developed sciences each man has only a limited sense of freedom to shape or alter them; but they are not themselves wholly determined by the findings of science. They are largely of an æsthetic character. The words that we use: simplicity, elegance, beauty: indicate that what we grope for is not only more knowledge, but knowledge that has order and harmony in it, and continuity with the past. Like all poor fellows, we want to find something new, but not something too new. It is when we fail in that, that the great discoveries follow.

ALL THESE THEMES—the origin of science, its pattern of growth, its branching reticular structure, its increasing alienation from the common understanding of man, its freedom, the character of its objectivity and its openness—are relevant to the relations of science and culture. I believe that they can be and should be far more robust, intimate, and fruitful than they are to-day.

I am not here thinking of the popular subject of "mass culture." In broaching that, it seems to me one must be critical but one must, above all, be human; one must not be a snob; one must be rather tolerant and almost loving. It is a new problem; one must not expect it to be solved with the methods of Periclean Athens. In the problems of mass culture and, above all, of the mass media, it is not primarily a question of the absence of excellence. The modest worker, in Europe or in America, has within reach probably better music and more good music, more good art, more good writing than his predecessors have ever had. It seems rather that the good things are lost in such a stream of poor things, that the noise level is so high, that some of the conditions for appreciating excellence are not present. One does not eat well unless one is hungry; there is a certain frugality to the best cooking; and something of this sort is wrong with the mass media. But that is not now my problem.

Rather, I think loosely of what we may call the intellectual community: artists, philosophers, statesmen, teachers, men of most professions, prophets, scientists. This is an open group, with

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no sharp lines separating those that think themselves of it. It is a growing faction of all peoples. In it is vested the great duty for enlarging, preserving, and transmitting our knowledge and skills, and indeed our understanding of the interrelations, priorities, commitments, injunctions, that help men deal with their joys, temptations and sorrows, their finiteness, their beauty. Some of this has to do, as the sciences so largely do, with propositional truth, with propositions which say "If you do thus and so you will see this and that"; these are objective and can be checked and cross-checked; though it is always wise from time to time to doubt, there are ways to put an end to the doubt. This is how it is with the sciences.

In this community there are other statements which "emphasise a theme" rather than declare a fact. They may be statements of connectedness or relatedness or importance, or they may be in one way or another statements of commitment. For them the word "certitude," which is a natural norm to apply in the sciences, is not very sensible—depth, firmness, universality, perhaps more—but certitude, which applies really to verification, is not the great criterion in most of the work of a philosopher, a painter, a poet, or a playwright. For these are not, in the sense I have outlined, objective. Yet for any true community, for any society worthy of the name, they must have an element of community of being common, of being public, of being relevant and meaningful to man, not necessarily to everybody, but surely not just to specialists.

I HAVE BEEN much concerned that, in this world of change and scientific growth, we have so largely lost the ability to talk with one another, to increase and enrich our common culture and understanding. And so it is that the public sector of our lives, what we hold and have in common, has suffered, as have the illumination of the arts, the deepening of justice and virtue, and the ennobling power of our common discourse. We are less men for this. Never in man's history have the specialised traditions more flourished than to-day. We have our private beauties. But in those high undertakings when man derives strength and insight from public excellence, we have been impoverished. We hunger for nobility, the rare words and acts that harmonise simplicity with truth. In this default I see some connection with the great unresolved public problems—survival, liberty, fraternity.

In this default I see the responsibility that the intellectual community has to history and to our fellows: a responsibility which is a necessary condition for re-making human institutions as they need to be re-made to-day that there may be peace, that they may embody more fully those ethical commitments without which we cannot properly live as men.

This may mean for the intellectual community a very much greater effort than in the past. The community will grow; but I think that also the quality and the excellence of what we do must grow. I think, in fact, that with the growing wealth of the world, and the possibility that it will not all be used to make new committees, there may indeed be genuine leisure, and that a high commitment on this leisure is that we reknit the discourse and the understanding between the members of our community.

In this I think we have, all of us, to preserve our competence in our own professions, to preserve what we know intimately, to preserve our mastery. This is, in fact, our only anchor in honesty. We need also to be open to other and complementary lives, not intimidated by them and not contemptuous of them (as so many are to-day of the natural and mathematical sciences). As a start, we must learn again, without contempt and with great patience, to talk to one another; and we must hear.

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Margaret Shedd

I Hate You, Cruz Rivera

IT WAS NOT only his looks we held against that little boy, Cruz, it was the way he dangled the half-dead, struggling iguana. At least that was the way I felt. For the past few miles country children had been holding them up for sale but not so cruelly. The directions they gave us in Mexico City were look for your turn-off after you meet the children selling iguana on the road. They had also said the iguana were good eating, but although my precious Robert and I agreed on very little we did agree that that was the last thing on earth we'd eat.

Our reasons were different. Robert made one of his orations about how anyone but a fool could see that this was a prehistoric giant hooded and bedecked as any colossus should be, that this small dragon was a symbol of times past not understood, majesty ineluctable (what a word), ancient earth curves which the shrunken heart cannot quite forget. Of course Robert had been drinking along the way. Iguana don't affect me poetically. I think they are rather sinister and that the meat would probably be slimy.

It was a fact, though, that the one Cruz had was impressive, if you like the fantastic: purple, armoured, the crest along his head and back like a war-bonnet. As our car approached, the boy pushed the iguana on to the hot macadam on its green-fingered feet and then pulled it back with the cord and hung it in the air. The turn-off was right beside him, kilometer 144. We had to stop. At once our car was surrounded by ugly children.

"Go away," I said angrily.

Robert closed the window on his side as if this would protect him from them.

The leader, Cruz, as we later found out, put his dragon's head into my window. I knew more than words was necessary. I took out ten pesos. That dirty boy (in size like an American six-year-old but he looked about a hundred right then) didn't reach for the money until I pushed it at him.

"Look, we'll buy all your iguana. But don't keep them dangling around. Kill them right away."

Cruz said, "Why shouldn't we take them back to the river? Why not, Miss?" With the car stopped we could hear the water.

"How silly can you get, Julia?" Robert sounded perfectly drunk. It had caught up with him all of a sudden and I was glad we were standing still because he would not give up a wheel once he started to drive no matter how much he drank. "Julia, you know perfectly well that he'll keep them alive to sell them again. Why give him money? Look at him." Robert laughed. "You want to demoralise him, don't you, dear little Julia?"

Indeed Cruz was eyeing my purse and I thought triumphantly (why was that?) that there was very little he wouldn't do to get hold of it. I took out another ten pesos, maybe to annoy Robert, or maybe it was some funny idea of letting Cruz see the roll of money I had.

Meantime I said to Robert, "You listen to me. I want him to kill them exactly so he can't sell them again. Anyway, let him get

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them away so we don't have to look at them. Go on, get them away."

Cruz shrugged, but the absurd deal was made and the iguana were dangled off by two of the smaller boys. Now a wad of girls crowded round, filthier than the boys. They kept saying, "Give me a five centavos."

"Talk about demoralise. Look at them, Robert. Your architect friend must have put in his oar."

Robert didn't answer because he was going to sleep, his curly head on the steering wheel and his hands clutching it like a life-preserver.

ONE GIRL spoke rapidly. She was taller than the rest, almost fair, and wore a dress that had once been blue, with inset lace around her breasts and the skirt, but now the same dirt colour as the others' garments which looked as if they were made of flour sacking. I was sorry I knew some Spanish because I could understand that her whine was a wanton itemising of me, making fun of me and telling the things she could do for Robert. I looked away from her. I was frightened. Cruz was back at the window doing lassoing tricks, the coil of rope in his iguana hand. He said belligerently, and that animosity was a relief after the pale blue girl, "Are you waiting for the jeep from the ranch?"

"Yes." I admitted it reluctantly. It was going to be dark all too soon. We had no idea where the ranch was, only that its name was *The Pomegranates*. We had been told you went up a mountain road which only a jeep could manage and that our host would meet us at kilometer 144. Instead, here was a village with a lot of children, and no adults as far as we could tell, and an unpronounceable name you could never hope to get used to, *ts* and *zs* so tightly crowded together that they vibrated and made the word into a weapon which left you helpless however, since you did not know how to use it. The place was old with a run-down church and a jail and mud houses. Probably we had driven through many villages like it, but this one seemed outlandish.

As far as that went we didn't know our host either, nor could I imagine why he would want a house in such an out-of-the-way place. I had never met him; Robert barely once or twice, and had heard him lecture. Naturally he was interested in him because he was an architect and famous, Eric Something, and Robert was so excited about being invited up there that it had become the high spot of our trip. He said this house was the most beautiful thing Eric Whatever-hisnamewas had ever designed and that finally he had bought it from the people who had him build it and lived there himself.

All the way out from Mexico City Robert kept saying, with his hands moving rhythmically on the wheel, "What a place for a honeymoon, Julia." I realised now that it had been the banking up of drunkenness, not mere repetitious lust. We were on our honeymoon, true enough, well into the third dire week, and we had known each other a tired long time before that. Robert also said repetitiously that Eric hardly ever asked anyone to come there. By now I was wondering if this invitation had somehow been forced out of him by Robert and if maybe he never intended to meet us.

Amid his whirling rope coils Cruz remarked, "The jeep is broken."

"How do you know?"

"I heard yesterday that the oil all came out on one of the steep grades."

I thought he was saying this to torment me. I did know from his voice that the place and children were not only strange, they were our enemies, especially Cruz. I saw I would have to make a friend of this enemy if I could.

"What's your name, boy?"

He told me Cruz Rivera, without tacking on the usual abracadabra about at your service and I am your loyal servitor.

"How old are you?"

"Nine years." And he went right on, "What's your name, Miss?"

"Mine? My name? Why, it's Julia." I answered without even thinking. That was because he was staring at me so hard.

He said it softly, the *j* like an *h*, "Julia."

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His eyes were black and large but they were opaque. What was he looking at—the car stylish and ugly, two gringos, the blond big man half asleep, stayed on the cold top mirror of those eyes. I had on a white sweater and white slacks. I had known they were foolish for a trip in a jeep but I wanted to look my best. Why? Who knows? Somehow the unknown host with his perfect house was a challenge I had to try to meet. Robert too was dressed in light colours; he always wears blue to match his eyes, so his sweater was that, and his slacks pale grey. I could see ourselves refracted off the blank eyes of Cruz Rivera and we looked unripe.

Cruz was dressed in light colours too, that classic flour-sack white that had never been washed. There were wrap-round pants and a shirt. Every visible part of him was dirt worn and not temporary by any means, deep into his skin. He reached out his hand and touched my bare arm resting along the window-frame. That small hand was cold, and not exactly scaly but as dry as scales.

"Don't do that. Please don't."

He laughed, and his eyes peeled back their unlighted surface and I saw a little boy, a laughing boy. For that moment I wasn't afraid.

He said it right out, "Don't be afraid of me, Julia. I'll take you up to *The Pomegranates*. If you have one of those electric torches we'll be fine. I know the road even in the dark. The electric light would be for you so you wouldn't fall. Part of the road is along the top of a precipice."

He was absolutely tender and compelling. I thought I never before had met such a virtuous child. I was ready to take the flashlight out of the glove compartment, leave Robert sleeping there, and climb the mountain road with Cruz.

I said, "You better get yourself awake, Robert. Your fine friend has evidently forgotten us so we'll have to go on foot." The last thing I wanted was to take that winding drive back with Robert. The walk up the mountain now seemed dangerous to me, but less so than a three-hour ride with a drunken man, husband or no.

Anyway, Robert wasn't going to miss his big treat for anything. He climbed out of the car, locked it laboriously, and stumbled down the short incline Cruz showed us was the beginning of the way. Cruz led.

IT WASN'T dark yet. In fact there was a fine sunset unfurling distances one after the other, brash mountains halved in prehensile struggle, purple on slashed sides and rolling blue where rocks and earth were not afraid to make a slope slanted for the rain. The wash of good evening light was filtered by Indian laurels in the table-land which the path was following. No time like early evening, I thought, while a goat tribe picked its horizontal way across the terraced cow paths of a slope on the other side of the valley from us.

We could hear the river, softly, for we were far above it.

I think I agree with Robert that happiness is for fools, but here was a place so plainly mine—the earth's tilt so particular that I needed not to hide from myself, at least, that it made me joyful to see this appropriate beauty. Even the words to match came into my mind although I laughed at Robert when he used that kind of language. Morning glory vines grew thickly along the path and I saw one flower blooming, a mistake of course but the blue-purple was just as reminiscent of childhood mornings as if it had been morning instead of day end.

The darkness reached us when we were on a plateau of small up-ended rocks and a prickly shrub that had taken the place of the laurels. A family of dogs barked far away, high-pitched country baying not the clack of city dogs. And, too, as dark came we heard bells, cow not church. The two sounds offset each other and the whirr of grasshopper legs threw the balance toward peace.

Cruz was first, I came next, and Robert last. Although Robert was not staggering now, he sometimes slipped on a loose rock. So did I, that small shattering jerk more disturbing than a fall. Only Cruz walked surely on his tough bare feet. I think if the twilight had only lasted longer we would

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have been friends. It was the darkness that set us on edge again, because it got harder and harder to know who we were, and Robert and I certainly had no idea where we were. Perhaps that made me think again that Cruz was my enemy. In the sundown light and especially in the presence of those wild flowers, besides the morning glory, growing in every space a flower could find, mostly small with open faces and golden hearts, we were able to watch the boy and take him as part of the place. It was different in the dark.

The first thing was that Robert and I began to stumble badly, and there was Cruz surer of himself without a light than we were with it. Robert kept calling me to share the torch with him, and I tried and did, but if I put the light behind me too much of the time I was left in the dark myself. Then he demanded that I give it to him. That I would not do, having learned in these three weeks that his first and last thought was for himself. He came up to me. I felt his hand on my wrist, so tight that I was going to have to drop the torch. Above the water's din—the path was descending and we were directly over the river, it seemed—I shouted to him that if the torch fell it would break.

"Then give it to me, you fool."

We hated each other so much just then that it was like a straight black unpolished, unbendable shaft between us. And it was right at that moment that Cruz called out, his voice not frightened but peremptory, urgent, "Give me the light this way, Miss, this way."

I wrenched my arm free, obeying that child voice which had to shout to be heard and in doing so had shed everything but childishness. I threw the torchlight wildly, hunting for Cruz, because in the hullaballoo with Robert I had lost what sense of space I had managed to hang on to in the dark. The beam moved wide, found a lightning-struck crippled tree crouching over the path on one side, felt its way into the drop on the other, not far to the river but steep, and finally caught Cruz.

I had been very anxious to find him. Perhaps I thought he had fallen. But, no, he was standing as straight as he could and he had let down those white wrap-around pants and there he was, male child. Why was he exhibiting himself? Why the command to throw the light on him?

The sounds Robert made were not of disgust but of fierce and pungent anger. "The miserable, foul little son of a bitch," and the words were mixed with action, scrambling rage, sound changed into literal motion. In one arc he grabbed the torch and pushed me out of the way and pounced toward Cruz. I followed, of course. The hate blazing in me was for the compound of the two, not Cruz, not Robert, but an amalgam of both. No, I hated Cruz Rivera.

The beam of light skittered this way and that, fragmented by indecent motion. The three of us were also fragmented by the light until we were more than three, a crowd, a mob of hunters and the hunted, jeerers and the jeered. Cruz fell to the mob.

Perhaps he had called because while he stood there with his pants down he had suddenly found he was too near the edge and had shouted unmindful of his exposure, but his voice had not sounded like that. Now, with us both scrabbling at him (I do remember that my hand touched him once) he was falling and we heard a rock we had loosened go down after him, and then many more. And we heard one scream, as far-off and penetrating as the memory of a nightmare.

We went down the bank, almost a precipice. Most of the time I was sliding. It was the only way for me to get there. I was not grieving for Cruz. I had to see him before any feeling could begin.

A big rock had caught him and he lay bunched in among the loose ones which had followed him. He was stripped of his dirty clothes, rolling down had done that, I suppose, a dying little child. He was gasping, and you could hear it above the river's wash, overpoweringly near, the rush of a waterfall. Once the flashlight touched up the ropes of water tossed down from the mountain above. Cruz had fallen at the foot of the waterfall.

I could still hear him gasp, and I heard him

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call my name, "Julia, Julia, this is where we find the iguana." It seems he wanted badly to say that because it cost him a great effort. I think his neck was broken. He straightened out then, arched up once, and his head fell back. There was no doubt then that he was dead.

THERE WAS enough light spilling over from the shaft Robert had on Cruz so that we could see each other. Our clothes were neither blue nor grey nor any colour but that dirty white that had never been washed.

Robert said, "It was you who pushed him, wasn't it, Julia? You know that, don't you, Julia?"

To get back up the precipice was a black time, the waterfall to one side of us dulling all sound of effort. We didn't help each other except that Robert shone the torch my way from erratic time to time. In the dark I clung to whatever there was, a trunk or root or rock.

When we got to the top we were confronted by lights, suddenly, as if they came on for us, although I think simply we couldn't see them until we climbed the overhanging lip of the bank. It was a house illumined for a festival, light pouring in layers on to great trees that surrounded the house. There was a wall and a gate in front, both lustrous bright. It occurred to me that Cruz might have been calling out to say we had reached *The Pomegranates* because it looked as if we were back on the path at the place we had left it. Here was the little promontory on which Cruz had stood. But lights there certainly had not been before.

Now the electric torch seemed ridiculous. I don't know whether Robert put it out or it was invisible in the majestic brilliance of lighted foliage and of the granite and beautiful wall and of a wooden gate that belonged in that setting. We stood for a while, certainly not looking at each other but at the gate. Finally Robert walked over to it and knocked. The knock sounded strong and it comforted me. We did exist. Our knock was audible.

There was a long wait before the gate was opened. That man was Eric, but he was nothing like what I had expected. Small. Ancient. And in the first moment I saw that he was invincible, not a man you could urge to anything.

"Who are you?" he said loudly.

"Eric, Eric." Robert's voice was weak, unlike those fine knocks he had made on the gate. I don't think the old man heard him at all and I could tell Robert was afraid of him. "Eric, you asked me to come."

"No, I don't know you. Who are you? You seem to be in trouble and I'd gladly send you down in the jeep, but I have just this moment dispatched that to the village for a friend of mine and his bride, who've been waiting there a long while. We are having trouble with the jeep." He spoke just like that, slowly, pedantically. And he closed the gate.

He closed the gate, but first I saw past him to the house. Between us and it, even between the gate and the house, flowed a quiet river, but the same one that made the waterfall. Beyond the gleaming, sparkling river the house of glass, lighted to greet a bridal pair, stirred because those trees around it moved in the wind.

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Richard Rees

War at Sea

A Memoir

IN THE GARDEN of the Quakers' villa at Barcelona there was an exquisite little lemon tree. If anyone had told me before 1937 that the time would come when I should live for months in a house with a lemon tree in the garden and get scarcely any pleasure from it I should have disbelieved him. Yet I do not remember that I ever once looked closely at the small waxy white flowers on this tree, or noticed that ripe and unripe fruit as well as buds and flowers can all be seen simultaneously on a lemon tree. But if I was unresponsive to nature while I was in Spain, I was almost equally so to human nature. I was like a puppet among puppets or a ghost among ghosts. Partly, no doubt, this was because I was so often in a state of fatigue, or anxiety, and it was sometimes the same in the Navy between 1940 and 1945. Another thing that was brought home to me both in Spain and in the Navy was the untruth of the theory that the best way to get to know a place is by having work to do in it. This is a complete fallacy if one's work is at all laborious. To a sailor, Cardiff can seem almost indistinguishable from Syracuse, except that the one place is dirty, muddy and cold while the other is dirty, dusty and hot. On the other hand, the idle tourist sees the whole world through a wall of glass which filters and sterilises all his experience. So, what with one thing and another, it is difficult to get to know the world.

But in times of crisis we do at least get an opportunity to know more about *ourselves*. Or we would do, except for the fact that "mankind cannot bear very much reality." In normal life we are protected from the reality, or unreality, of ourselves by conventional duties and routines. We sometimes say we are enslaved by them. Then there comes a crisis—a civil war, or a breakdown of organised life as in Barcelona in 1939 or in Paris in 1940; or a threat of it as in the London blitz—and in whatever way we react to this crisis, whether with courage and a feeling of exhilaration or with panic and hysteria, we always feel a sort of release from the constraints of everyday life. But this sense of release is generally pure illusion. We are in fact more enslaved than ever; we become more puppet-like and mechanical, not less. To D. H. Lawrence the soldiers of the first world war looked like drugged men, or dumb oxen being driven to the slaughter. There is an argument about this in *Aaron's Rod*:

> "... I won't be hypnotised. The war was a lie and is a lie and will go on being a lie till somebody busts it."
>
> "It was a fact—you can't bust that. You can't bust the fact it happened."
>
> "Yes, you can. It never happened. It never happened to me. No more than my dreams happen. My dreams don't happen; they only seem."
>
> "But the war did happen right enough," smiled Aaron palely.
>
> "No, it didn't. Not to me or to any man, in his own self. It took place in the automatic sphere, like dreams do. But the *actual man* in every man was just absent—asleep—or drugged—inert—dream-logged. That's it."
>
> "You tell 'em so," said Aaron.
>
> "I do. But it's no good. Because they won't wake up now—perhaps never. They'll all kill themselves in their sleep."

And Simone Weil, reflecting on her experience of the Spanish civil war spoke of "realities which have no more dimensions than a dream." The crimes and atrocities she witnessed in Spain were indeed committed and yet, she says, they remained "in a sense imaginary." "The crimes in Spain were actually perpetrated," she writes, "and yet they resembled mere acts of boastfulness ... Crimes flat like dreams on both sides: on the side of the executioner and on the side of the victim. What more frightful than to die in a nightmare?" (*Gravity and Grace*).

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When I wrote that the years 1937–1945 were, in a sense, a relaxation for me after the nine years of association with Murry's strangely impersonal ardours and endurances, I meant that much of my life in Spain and in the world war was lived, in Simone Weil's sense, in fewer dimensions than before. It was "flat like a dream." Simone Weil's definition of sin as an attempt to do away with the third dimension of living is admirably elucidated by M. Gustave Thibon in his preface to *Gravity and Grace*:

> All sin is an attack against the third dimension, an attempt to bring back to the plane of unreality and painlessness an emotion which seeks to penetrate to the depths. This law is inexorable: we lessen our own suffering to the extent that we weaken our inner and direct communion with reality. At the extreme limit of this process life is entirely stretched out on the surface; we suffer no more except in a dream; for existence, reduced to two dimensions, becomes flat like a dream. This holds good for consolations, illusions, boasting and all the compensatory reactions by which we try to fill up the hollows bitten into us by reality.

So the prolonged crises with which we have become so familiar in this century seem to teach us little about ourselves. Individually we become more automatic, more mechanical, more "dream-logged" as Lawrence puts it, and collectively we indulge more than ever in boasting and illusory consolations: nationalism, the "conquest of space," and political, economic, or scientific utopias.

And yet, by observing oneself and others at times of crisis, when the release from normal habitual restraints reveals so clearly our enslavement to our own psychological automatism and inertia, it ought to be possible to learn a little of the humility which is the first step towards wisdom. The right intellectual approach to humility is indicated, I believe, in Murry's essay on *The Detachment of Naturalism*. It consists in recognising that we are not only "creatures passive to the impulses of instinct and emotion" but also "creatures passive to the visitations of thought." It means recognising, in other words, that we are incapable of any spontaneous act arising from our own initiative, and capable only of being acted upon by forces which we cannot control. "Mind is a sense organ"; or, as Orage puts it in his exposition of Gurdjieff's teaching, "all psychic and psychological phenomena are of the same order as physiological phenomena." To many of those who dare to face it, this seems a discouraging and, indeed, a devastating realisation. But it is the first and necessary step towards the humility which makes wisdom possible.

That there is a further step is obvious. But it can only be described by those who have taken it, and their descriptions are barely intelligible. Their acts, however, are sometimes intelligible enough, and I believe Max Plowman was recognising one such act when he wrote his poem about the "self-effacing bravery" of a lance-corporal on the Somme. This kind of goodness is wisdom and is a mystery.

My experiences in the second world war did little to enlighten me about the mystery of goodness; but they did two other things. They confirmed my belief, dating back nearly twenty years, that a certain harmoniousness of temperament or nature, which predisposes to goodness, is commoner among the less privileged and less intellectual classes. And they also improved my self-knowledge, or perhaps my self-ignorance. I mean that they compelled me to see further into myself and to realise more clearly that there seemed to be nothing there. I am not a mystic and I have no first-hand knowledge of the mystical self-abeyance or self-naughting or denudation, whether intentional and systematic or spontaneously occurring. But I am intellectually convinced that, for the corrupt and complicated like myself and an ever-increasing number of people, it is a possible and ultimately a necessary experience. It is the essential preliminary to realising the inner harmony which predisposes to goodness. I have no difficulty at all in assenting intellectually to the proposition that "there is no health in us" and therefore that any symptom of health is a proof of supernatural grace, meaning something not to be expected in the ordinary nature of things. "The natural man by his natural actions" always tends "to bring moral degradation and universal catastrophe upon himself."

Between 1940 and 1945 I served in three merchant ships and then in the Navy, and this experience further strengthened my belief in the, so to speak, negative superiority of the less privileged classes over their social "superiors." By negative superiority I mean the absence of certain impediments to goodness rather than any positive superiority in goodness. Back in England in July, 1940, after the Franco-Ger-

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man armistice I escaped from the reserved occupation of refugee relief worker and began feverishly seeking some kind of active service. It looked at first as if there was nothing for a man of forty except as an army lorry driver or an R.A.F. officer's servant; but eventually I discovered that there was still an opening for trained naval gunners in defensively equipped merchant ships. This led to three weeks at a gunnery school, and thence to an old and dirty tramp steamer in which I was the only non-civilian and in charge of a 12-pounder anti-submarine gun and a machine gun, both of which, in theory at least, I knew how to fire and maintain in order, together with a number of other defensive gadgets, including a kite, about which I understood nothing. The crew of this ship, so far as I can remember, consisted of eight men, including a cabin boy who looked barely seventeen. One of the seamen and the cabin boy constituted my gun's crew. I believe the entire ship's company except the second engineer, who was southern Irish, came from Glasgow and it is astonishing to me that they accepted, or appeared to accept, me with my strikingly different accent and manner, without turning a hair. I had foreseen with apprehension that I should be expected to play card games, which I have never learnt to do, and to pretend to enjoy pub-crawling when ashore. But not at all, I was made to feel completely at home in every way without ever being expected to make any social effort whatever. The atmosphere of discreet friendliness and tolerance was one of the most pleasant I have ever known, comparable indeed to that of an Italian village where I once stayed alone for a fortnight, at the end of which I was treated as if I had been born there. Particularly striking was the mate's suppression of the contempt he must have felt when he saw me writhing like a cement Laocoon (we carried cement and all of us were coated in its dust) in the coils of the kite. He rescued me and finished the job himself without a hint of impatience or criticism. This man must have had his faults like everyone else, but I never saw him anything but cheerful, good-humoured and competent. The captain was a quiet and reserved young man with cloudy blue eyes, sleek fair hair and a high colour. He had domestic troubles, which seemed to weigh heavily on him. The cabin boy was remarkably canny and responsible for his age. If I had to criticise any of them it would be the donkey-engine man, who was a cigarette cadger. Cigarettes were in short supply in 1940 and when we were ashore I was the only one who had the foresight to buy as many as possible, so as not to run short while at sea. I occasionally received a message from the bridge that the Captain wondered if the gunner had any cigarettes to spare; and as for the donkey-man, he wondered this all the time. He used to call me his "old cigarette pal," which irritated me a little, perhaps partly because I considered that he was older than I. The only piece of unpleasantness I remember during more than three months in this ship was a fearful quarrel between the first and second engineers. I never knew the subject of the quarrel—it could have been religion, as one was from Glasgow and the other from Dublin—but the result was that they stopped speaking to one another. The first engineer was a melancholy, whimsical and probably consumptive little Glaswegian. Whenever he met me he would sing, in a small gnat-like hum: *"There was a wee gunner who came from Fife."* One day he suggested that when I wanted a hot bath I could always fill a tub with hot water in the engine room. This was an almost unimaginable luxury, but it involved descending some formidable and filthy iron ladders to reach the hot water supply. My only grievance against the first engineer was his habit of standing near the door of my cabin—which was in fact more like a dirty and ramshackle home-made cupboard—and spitting not into the sea but on the deck. It was very disagreeable if one was feeling slightly sea-sick to step out of the cabin on to a deck slimy with spittle.

After several convoys from the Bristol Channel to the Thames and back via the north of Scotland I seized an opportunity to transfer to a much larger, brand-new motor-vessel which had just been launched in the Clyde. I was weary of being permanently coated in cement or coal dust. (When our cargo was not cement it was coal, and in either case the dust got into one's bunk, into one's locker, and into one's hair, skin, eyes and lungs.) The new ship seemed by comparison a floating luxury hotel; and it had another great advantage in my eyes, in that its gun was bigger and it had a larger complement of machine guns and defensive gadgets, so that it required two naval gunners, of whom I would be the junior and therefore free from the sense of responsibility. Unfortunately, this ship was

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bombed and disabled on its maiden voyage from the Clyde to Cardiff, on a lovely Spring evening some way off Aberystwyth. It happened also to be my forty-first birthday. During the few minutes when we were attacked, by a single plane, I recollect with regret that, although I was not consciously frightened, I was strictly speaking hardly conscious at all. Palsied and dizzy with panic would be a fair description, and if the senior gunner had not told me what to do I might simply have stood and dithered without even thinking of taking cover. We did, however, fire some machine gun bursts at the plane, which was so close above us that we can hardly have missed; but it would be a very lucky hit with a machine gun that could disable an aeroplane, and it disappeared apparently unharmed. The ship was not sunk but had to be withdrawn for lengthy repairs; and after a trip to Iceland in a new and clean but very small motor-vessel I renewed my acquaintance with C.P.O. Roberts, a particularly formidable gunners' mate, in a course for promotion from seaman-gunner to gun-layer.

ONCE ASHORE AGAIN, one had to remember one's appearance, about which nobody bothered at all in merchant ships. And here I think it is worth noting that a man of forty who enlists in the Navy is liable, if he is at all self-conscious, to feel that he has been put into fancy dress. I felt like a Pirate of Penzance. I never got used to wearing an open-necked collar festooned with a black satin cravat, and bell-bottomed trousers; and the short tunic left me feeling chilly around the kidneys. I soon discovered, however, that the picturesque uniform was a source of much pride and satisfaction to many of the younger ratings. Because a dark blue collar betrayed one as a novice they went to endless trouble rinsing their collars in hot water to give them a faded look. And they resisted with considerable success the regulation limiting the width of bell-bottomed trousers. I remember a kit inspection at which several ratings were ordered to have their trouser bottoms taken in. They pouted and sulked like chorus ladies accused of being too *décolletées*. One's best uniform, for smart occasions, was known as "m'tiddly suit" or simply as "m'tiddlies," and before going on leave careful plans were made:

"Goin' to wear yer tiddlies in the train?"

"Christ, no. Take 'em in a parcel and change in the lavatory before we get to Manchester."

MY SECOND gunnery course finished towards the end of the summer of 1941, by which time it had become easier for volunteers in the R.N.V.R. to obtain temporary commissions, and heavy pressure was brought on me by the Commanding Officer to let my name go forward. C.P.O. Roberts, on the other hand, in his superlative report on my gun-drill performances had added: "I do not recommend him for an instructor." It would interest me to know his reasons. Perhaps he disliked the idea that, as an instructor, I should presumably be kept on land, whereas it fitted better with his fantasy of me that I should be engaging aeroplanes and submarines in the Atlantic. Or it may have been that he was quite unusually perspicacious and recognised what no one else in the Navy ever seemed to do—except, later on, those whom I was to command—namely, that I was extremely deficient in what was officially known as O.L.Q.—officer-like qualities. If this was his reason, he was perfectly right, but I think he went a little too far. I should probably have made quite an adequate non-commissioned instructor. But what exactly *are* O.L.Q.? In the eyes of the Admiralty they probably include a whole collection of qualities, some of which I may possess; but the most essential of them is a certain self-confidence which makes it easy for a man to take command and enforce discipline. Obviously this is far from sufficient by itself, but without it none of the other qualities are of any avail. It is for the lack of this quality that some school teachers are unable to control their classes. What causes the lack of it? I believe that, as with almost every other weakness, the answer is egotism. It is the dislike of getting oneself disliked. But there must be some special reason why egotism should take this form and not one of the many other forms, such as the delight in asserting oneself and making others do what they don't want to do. I believe the egotism of those who lack the power to command is the egotism of the insecure.

At this time I was feeling very insecure indeed. Even if I avoided becoming an officer, my new rank as gun-layer made it inevitable that I should be the senior gunner in my next ship, which would probably be a large and important one, with formidable armaments and two or more assistant gunners—a weight of responsibility which appeared to me overwhelming. Nevertheless, I held out for a time because the alternative of going to the officers' training

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school to learn navigation and then to sea as an executive officer looked even more undesirable. The C.O. invited me to dinner for a heart-to-heart talk and pointed out almost imploringly that the war might last a long time, and surely I couldn't want to spend the whole of it on the lower deck? When I saw no objection to this he took the line: "My dear fellow, I assure you no one admires and likes the British sailor more than I do, but that doesn't mean I want to have him hanging round my neck the whole time." I did not dare reply that, weight for weight, the British sailor might be easier on the neck than the British officer.

But in the end I argued myself into believing that I could perhaps assist the war effort more effectively in a job where my linguistic and editorial experience would be of use. And before very long I was commissioned and appointed, not without influential assistance, to a job at the Admiralty which I believed—wrongly, as it turned out, in my opinion—would be suited to my abilities. It pains me to think that if C.P.O. Roberts knew of this his disillusionment and melancholy may have been increased. It pains me also to observe that my pattern of behaviour was the same in both the Spanish war and the world war. In each case I began with a bold gesture, committing myself further than I was conventionally obliged to do, and in each case I wriggled out of the resulting situation. Yet I cannot altogether regret my behaviour in either case. I am glad I was not killed at Teruel or on the Ebro; and in a sense I was right to struggle all through the war to avoid the kind of appointment for which I knew my character unfitted me. I believe, moreover, that it was sometimes a sort of blind, snobbish prejudice that prevented others from seeing that I was not of the stuff of which popular or even competent officers are made. A titled ex-public-school boy without O.L.Q.? Impossible!

NEVERTHELESS, when I reported to the Admiralty as a sub-lieutenant in the autumn of 1941 I needed to fight down the feeling that I had run away once again. Which, of course, I had—though the motive had been moral rather than physical cowardice. But it was not long before I began to feel that the fire into which I had jumped was much hotter than the frying-pan I had escaped from. For the first few days, however, in the comparative spaciousness and orderliness of the Admiralty basements I felt an overwhelming sense of peace and refreshment, which was chiefly due to the cultured voices, courteous manners, and intelligent conversation of the people I worked with. On my first day there I heard someone whistling very tunefully in a lavatory the aria *Là ci darem la mano*. After months of *Roll out the Barrel, Down Mexico Way, Red Sails in the Sunset,* and *She'll be coming round the Mountain,* it was as though I had found my way into heaven.

But I was to spend very nearly the whole of two years in the Admiralty, and were it not that all my experiences throughout the war were, in Simone Weil's sense, two-dimensional and therefore dreamlike, I should say that they were two of the worst years of my life. It was nobody's fault. It is even possible that the work I did was of some use, though I often doubted this. But I had never done intellectual, or semi-intellectual, work in such exacting conditions. A sixty- or seventy-hour week, with periodical night-duty in addition, by artificial light in crowded underground rooms. In the winter one might almost literally never see the light of day for a week. And what added to the dream-like effect was that everybody else seemed to enjoy the work and to be sustained by a sense of its peculiar importance. Instead of leaving at the first possible moment to get into daylight and fresh air, people hung about talking to their friends on night-duty and seemed, indeed, to regard the place as an agreeable social club. I felt much more of an alien in the Admiralty than I had done as an ordinary seaman. However, it was always possible to reflect how infinitely worse the life must be in a submarine. But I had been at sea and I knew that in the most important respect, that of human relationships, the life in a submarine might be not worse but very much better. I never became a great Satrap but was always a slave in the vast paper Empire for which I laboured; but the work brought me within sight of some of the "corridors of power." What I saw confirmed overwhelmingly my previously formed conviction that to approach them would be, for me a step towards perdition. The air in them smelt to me unhealthy.[1]

[1] But it has always been too easy for me to keep my nose clean, and if I can afford to sniff at the rat race it is only because I was never obliged to run it.

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WHEN people speak of the horrors of war they are usually referring to wounds, death, and destruction. But there is another more recondite horror. Nothing can be worse than to destroy God's gifts; but to abuse and pervert them is surely quite as bad. My work sometimes brought me in contact with the citizens of other great Whitehall paper Empires and I saw men of exceptional ability exerting themselves in tasks which recalled H. G. Wells' description of Henry James—an elephant using its trunk to pick up pins. The necessities of war make this inevitable, but it is not the least of war's horrors to see it being done. This particular horror is memorably illustrated in Goronwy Rees' *A Bundle of Sensations*, when he relates how he and a number of other men of intellectual or artistic distinction pored for hours over old picture postcards and souvenirs of Dieppe, studying snapshots of bathing parties or picnickers so as to ascertain which slopes of shingle were suitable for tank-landing. In itself, of course, this kind of work is not very different from certain kinds of scholarship; and in the circumstances of war its purpose is unimpeachable. What is nightmarish is to have to say this of such an ugly and sinister purpose.

In the same way, when I went to sea again in 1943 and found myself in charge of code books it appalled me to think of brilliant cryptographers in London and Washington lavishing their skill to produce volume after costly volume of these nauseating and grotesque publications. Moreover, in this case it is even doubtful if all the work was necessary. My guess is that a great deal of it, perhaps twenty-five per cent or more, was not. The British and, even more, the American Navy seemed almost hysterical about security; the French a little less so. In the Mediterranean, after the German surrender I received a weather report in a code for which I possessed no key, so the Captain had to manage without information. The Germans had stopped fighting; can it really have been necessary to keep the Japanese Navy in ignorance of the weather off Genoa? Security is all-important in war, of course, and there may have been some reason, unknown to me, for secrecy in this case. But the security services are a great paper Empire and I suspect the cryptographers have a powerful lobby pressing for ever greater use of more and more elaborately perfected codes. And can one blame them? They may be, perhaps, in civilian life brilliant mathematicians, archaæologists, musicians, or chess-players; they are caught up in a war machine which tortures their talent into the devising of codes. They would be more than human if they did not exaggerate the need for what they produce. It is ironic that, in spite of the pedantic secrecy of routine reports, neither the Admiralty nor the Foreign Office seem to be very good at security in more important matters. To wrap weather reports up in unbreakable codes while failing to protect secret documents from traitors and spies is typical of the weakness of hypertrophied bureaucracy. I am probably prejudiced, but the Radcliffe Committee seems to take a not entirely dissimilar view.

DURING THE TWO YEARS I worked at the Admiralty I dreamed several times that I was in German-occupied Paris. I did not know how I had got there nor what I was supposed to be doing. I was merely in terror of being suspected, arrested and questioned, and it was a most harrowing nightmare. I think I can interpret this nightmare, and the interpretation shows how the truth about one's subjective condition can be a very odd travesty of the objective facts. This is what I think it means: German-occupied Paris is the Admiralty, and my presence there shows that I have joined what is, for me, the wrong side in a war—not the war against Hitler but a metaphysical or other-worldly war—and that I have a premonition of being in great danger. Except that it was so much more sinister and terrifying, it was rather as though I were back in the atmosphere of the London Season in the days before I joined the Labour Party. That I could dream of my estimable colleagues at the Admiralty as a German occupation force is sufficient proof of what a mistake I had made in thinking that the Admiralty would be the right place for me. And yet I believe I might have made worse mistakes if I had not gone there. Anyhow, when I heard in the Spring of 1943 that liaison officers were going to be required for some French ships in the Mediterranean I felt like a prisoner who sees a chance of reprieve. It looked like an ideal job for me. I imagined, more or less correctly, that my poor imitation of a naval officer might pass muster in a French ship, because its awkwardness would be taken for the awkwardness of one who finds himself in unfamiliar surroundings.

Once the difficulty of getting released from the Admiralty had been negotiated the appointment to a French ship was assured, because the job was not considered attractive. Indeed, Com-

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mander Cunard, who was responsible for the appointments, had the good sense to warn candidates that they would be as popular in the French Navy "as a whore at a funeral." He couldn't have been more right. Most of the units of the French fleet in the Mediterranean in the autumn of 1943 had spent the years since 1940 in internment at Alexandria. Recalling the events of those three years, it is not difficult to understand the prickly state of mind of the French officers. French warships had been bombarded and destroyed at Mers-el-Kebir by Admiral Somerville—acting reluctantly upon reluctantly given orders, but most French sailors made no allowance for that; another part of the fleet had destroyed itself at Toulon to avoid falling into German hands; and another part had gone over to General de Gaulle, whom the Alexandria officers regarded as an upstart and little better than a Communist; French North Africa had been invaded and Admiral Darlan murdered, though not by the Anglo-American invaders; and the authority of Marshal Pétain, to whom in their hearts most of them were still loyal, was vitiated even in their eyes by the German occupation of France. Nearly all of them were extreme conservatives with strong Royalist leanings. Their enthusiasm for the French provisional government at Algiers was minimal, but of the two joint heads of government they greatly preferred the vacillating, hide-bound, and reactionary General Giraud to their *bête noire,* de Gaulle.

The ship which I joined at Algiers in September, 1943, happened not to be one of the Alexandria group. She was a cruiser which had recently crossed the Atlantic from the Antilles to join the group, and the state of mind on board was if anything even more prickly than the one I have described. The thought of Algiers harbour controlled by the British Navy was presumably not quite so distasteful as the thought of Toulon and Brest in the hands of the Germans. But it was the British and not the Germans who were there before their eyes, and now they were confronted with a British officer with a party of British ratings for coding, telegraphy, and signals, whom they had to accommodate on board. This alien party was in possession of codes and secret signals to which not even the Captain himself was to be allowed access, and without these codes and signals the ship could not navigate or take part in operations in the Mediterranean, nor even communicate at sea with the British and American authorities. Small wonder that it was made clear to me at the start that we were indeed about as welcome as a bevy of whores at a funeral.

BEFORE joining this ship I was kept waiting at Gibraltar for two or three weeks, with no duties and in a state of considerable apprehension. But the change from London was so bewildering that I found it almost impossible to collect my mind and refresh my memories of the various courses I had been through, preparatory to becoming a liaison officer. It was late August and the heat and glare were overwhelming. My eyes were riveted by the piles of Mediterranean fruit on the greengrocers' stalls. Having seen nothing but apples for four years, it was like a dream. I remember buying a huge bag of grapes and lemons simply to look at them in my room and assure myself that such fruits still existed. Inside the Rock there were crowds of people working in much the same conditions as in the Admiralty; but they wore gleaming white clothes, and when off duty Naval and Wren officers could resort to a bathing beach on the east side of the Rock which made upon me the impression of a Lido for some strange new totalitarian functional aristocracy. This impression that the Mediterranean had been colonised by a new race of totalitarian aristocrats recurred a year later when I saw in a Palermo hotel a number of tall, handsome American women in uniforms which seemed to be plastered all over with metal eagles. It was as if Sicily had fallen to a battalion from across the Atlantic of the august Dea Roma's prodigal daughters.

I felt more of an outsider than ever and I sometimes thought wistfully of the filthy, cosy little tramp steamer butting its way from the Bristol Channel to the Thames round Cape Wrath and the Orkneys. But there was another new factor at Gibraltar, mysterious and for some reason slightly disturbing to me. (I was in such a state of nerves that every new thing represented a challenge to which I felt inadequate.) I refer to the Army, about which, although I had been in it for a short time in 1918, I knew almost nothing. Close to the flat in which I was staying was the garrison theatre, packed every night with, I supposed, the heroes of the desert; and at the same hour each night the hot, breathless air vibrated with the same tunes and the same roars of applause. There was one particular burst of noise which I began to

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wait for and which I found positively sinister. It was the finale of a song with the words:

"Cut off my legs and call me Shorty!"

Somehow it was particularly unpleasant to go to sleep with those words ringing in one's head.

After flying to Algiers and joining the French cruiser I ceased to be aware of any general impressions of the Mediterranean in war-time, having far too many close and immediate problems to worry about. But looking back on my time in that theatre of war it seems to me that a visitor from Mars in North Africa in 1944 would have imagined that Europe was being invaded by Africans. In the North African ports American negroes seemed to outnumber white Americans, and both the cruisers I served in were largely employed in transporting French *Goums*, British Swazis, and other coloured troops to Italy.

That I lived those two years on an almost sub-human level is clear enough to me from one simple fact. To-day, if my eyes have to go more than twelve months without seeing the blue of the Mediterranean they feel starved; and it is almost incredible to me, but nevertheless true, that I lived surrounded by it for nearly two years and hardly ever looked at it with conscious pleasure.

IT IS STRANGE that there should be so few studies of group psychology in ships. It is a most rewarding subject and the material is conveniently compact. Yet I can think of only one book in which it is approached with anything like the necessary subtlety, and that is *The Nigger of the "Narcissus."* A happy ship, of course, like a happy country, has no history; and a great many ships are happy, like the first tramp steamer I served in. The little ship in which I went to Iceland, however, contained one trouble-maker; but since he came from the same home-town as all the rest of the ship's company, except myself and the other naval gunner, he was too well known to be very successful. Occasionally a member of the crew would take me aside and ask me not to judge his hometown of Goole from its one troublesome citizen. This man was the steward, and he managed to serve up the meals with such an accompaniment of innuendo, grievance, and nervous fussiness that I still remember some of the food, such as tinned sausage and black pudding, as among the most nauseating I have ever eaten. He was as pertinacious as a wasp, and in the end he reduced my naval colleague, a fairly tough lad from a north Devon fishing village, to an almost psychotic condition. He had me rather rattled, too.

But in the French cruiser which I joined at Algiers there was nothing *but* trouble—of which I at once became the storm-centre or lightning-conductor. Being plunged into the chaos of post-invasion Algiers, with British and Americans everywhere, the French provisional government rent with schisms, and French authority only precariously surviving, the ship's officers were in the state that I have already described—fancying slights and insults everywhere, unsure of themselves, and at bottom desperately unhappy and anxious about the position of France in the world. I was obviously predestined for the role of whipping-boy and universal *bête noire*. Truthfulness compels me to note, however, that most of the other British liaison officers in French ships of the same complexion seemed to settle down without nearly so much emotional drama and storm as raged around me. So it may be that the drama was largely of my own making. On the other hand, it is true that most of the liaison officers were younger and probably more tough-minded than me, as well as being more experienced and more competent at sea, and therefore more sure of themselves. The situation in their ships may have been much the same as in mine without their noticing it.

In any case, the psychological situation in my ship was what it was, and its development was very strange and interesting. For the first few weeks I was treated as an interloper and spy. People would burst into my cabin with hysterical protests against some alleged insolence or other misdemeanour of the unfortunate British ratings. Scarcely veiled insults would be pinned up on the ship's notice-board, and everything possible was done to make my work difficult. But then, by imperceptible degrees, the situation began to change. When a quarrel or a state of sulks developed between two officers, it would happen that I was the only person who enjoyed the confidence of both. The time came when the Captain asked me if I understood the state of mind of an officer who seemed to have a grievance. After a month or two I seemed to enjoy a striking, if precarious, popularity. This, however, was offset by a deterioration in the morale of the party of British ratings. Their position was awkward, but less difficult than mine, because they had a separate mess of their

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own and were pretty much left to themselves. In a way their life was much easier than in a British ship. They had no British petty officers to harass them. But they were an isolated group in unfamiliar surroundings, and for the typical Englishman, with his incuriosity and conservatism, unfamiliarity breeds contempt. It would have taken a far more competent officer than myself to keep them up to the mark, and I am only surprised that their deterioration was not more conspicuous. Nevertheless, it was a constant anxiety, because any misdemeanour by *les matelots anglais* was sure to be inflated into a major outrage.

ODDLY ENOUGH, the one really serious slip they did make was allowed to pass without much notice. But this may have been because it occurred during one of our first missions when the Captain had not yet had sufficient experience of navigating in an operational area to understand how serious it was. He probably thought the near-disaster that occurred was a normal hazard of war-time navigation without lights—as indeed it was in the sense that it must often have happened, but that does not excuse the mistake. What happened was that in the small hours of the morning, in pitch dark, we sailed at full speed into a convoy of about fifteen ships, neither we nor they being able to show any lights, of course. That there was no collision is almost a miracle, or proves at least that the night vision and steering ability of sailors is almost miraculous. I, of course, being still at the height of unpopularity, was not called for during this emergency and I slept all through it. I only learned afterwards of the anguished and perilous manœuvring that had taken place. Having had no practical experience of naval communications but only of gunnery, I did not at first understand how the *contre-temps* had occurred; but I soon discovered that our ignorance of the position of the convoy was due to an error by my telegraphist or de-coder, or both of them. With suitable reservations I explained this to the Captain, thinking it would relieve his mind to know that I was in a position to prevent any more such incidents. But I fear the chief satisfaction he got was from being able to tell his assembled officers, when the incident was formally discussed, that it had been due to an error by the English; and I doubt if the gravity of the error was really appreciated. This incident recalls to me very vividly my state of mind at that time. If I had known that we were on the brink of any disaster, such as sailing into a minefield or being torpedoed, my first thought would have been: What mistake have I made? If I could be sure that I was in no way responsible, almost any disaster would have seemed comparatively negligible.

THE SLOW but in the end sensational improvement of my standing in the ship was largely due to the French sense of humour. It is difficult to maintain permanently against someone whom you meet at every meal an attitude of stiff, suspicious, injured *amour propre*; and especially so if you are by nature friendly, high-spirited, and charming, as many of these officers were. Gradually jokes and humour broke through, and although my function in the ship remained a grievance my company was more than tolerated. "What goes up must come down," and there is also some truth in the converse. When a certain degree of unpopularity has been reached—at least if it is to some extent unmerited—there is liable to be a reaction which may become progressively violent. Further, of course, a foreign liaison officer, if not completely antipathetic, is in a good position to mediate and conciliate among a group of men so strained and sensitive as these Frenchmen had every reason to be. And again, the fact that I was so obviously an insecure and unprofessional temporary sailor may have helped to create a certain fellow-feeling in the minds of men who felt insecure in almost every respect except that one. Had I seemed complacently efficient they might have suspected that I was contemptuous as well. Indeed, I am quite certain they would have done so, for it is almost impossible to exaggerate the inner distress they were suffering from the misfortunes of their country and their own divided and perplexed loyalties.

By temperament, conviction, and training they were about as ill-fitted as they could possibly be for facing intelligently the world of the 1940s; and since my reminiscences so often take the form of a criticism and rejection of progressive superstitions and shibboleths I must in fairness put it on record that the narrow, sterile, archaic, and reactionary conservatism of that part of the French Navy which I saw made it impossible for me to feel really at home with them, even when personal relations were at their most pleasant. Beneath the veneer of culture, free intelligence, and wit they were social and political fossils—sentimental about Mary Queen

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of Scots and Marie Antoinette, speaking of the sailors and of the working class in general as children (*"Le peuple est un enfant"*) who need to be loved and kept in order, but who have been spoilt and allowed to get out of hand by bad teachers. The conversation in the *carré des officiers* was incomparably wittier, gayer, and more cultured than in a British ward-room; but after listening to it for a few weeks one became aware that the outlook was narrower, more blinkered, and more prejudiced.

In spite of all this, there were many enjoyable moments. Thanks, perhaps, to Marshal Pétain's allegedly "fascist" cultural policy, there was much singing of old French ballads. I particularly liked *La Piémontaise*:

Je l'ai aimé, je l'aime encore
Je l'aimerai tant qu' je vivrai,
Je l'aimerai quand j'serai mort,
Si c'est donné aux trépassés.

and its charming last verse:

Alors j'ai tant versé de larmes
Que trois moulins en ont tourné.
Petits ruisseaux, grandes rivières
Pendant trois jours ont débordé.

There were also some dirty songs which had the unusual merit of doing what they set out to do with economy and point. I dare not do more than mention *Dudule*, which begins innocently, to a sentimental lullaby tune:

Ils étaient deux amants
Qui s'aimaient tendrement,
Tra la la la,

but the remainder is funny, both in words and music, though unprintable.[2] In the whole of my five years of naval life I spent very few days in British wardrooms, but I cannot believe that British naval officers ever let themselves go so uproariously and so melodiously as my French colleagues did when they bellowed these songs after our Gargantuan mid-day meal.

And here is another pleasant memory of North Africa in 1944. In the Tunisian Spring the young green corn is infested with wild anemones, which grow as profusely as poppies in an English cornfield. I remember returning from walks near the lake of Bizerta carrying enormous bunches of crimson and purple flowers—"black-purple and red anemones . . . real Adonis blood," as Lawrence called them—and everyone on board seemed to find this both natural and sensible. Had the cruiser been British, perhaps I would have done the same; but I might have hesitated a little.

I SHOULD like to believe that my gradual acceptance in the ship did something to help General de Gaulle, for whom I sometimes felt like a stand-in. He being inaccessible, the next best thing was to take it out of me. But there were many reasons for his gradually diminishing unpopularity, one of them being the inevitable disillusionment with General Giraud.

Un sauf-conduit signé "Giraud"
Ça vous conduit droit au poteau.

A safe-conduct signed "Giraud" conducts you straight to the gallows. Even in the *carré des officiers* this lampoon was repeated. Here is the story it refers to: Pierre Pucheu, a Vichy minister, resigned in 1942 and went to Spain. He had collaborated with the Germans in the executions of Frenchmen and in deporting French labour to Germany. Nevertheless, in 1943 he wrote to General Giraud, at that time the supreme French authority in North Africa, asking whether he would be *persona grata* and whether he could be useful if he came to North Africa. Giraud replied affirmatively, and authorised him to come. He arrived, and soon afterwards was arrested, tried, and shot. To quote General de Gaulle's *War Memoirs*: "During the trial, General Giraud, called as a witness, spoke of the accused with great reticence." De Gaulle himself characteristically has some generous words for Pucheu but defends this perfidious execution on the ground that the French combatants and resisters had to be given "immediate proof that the guilty would have to answer for their actions." However that may be, Giraud's prestige with his admirers was not enhanced by his desertion of a man who relied upon his protection.

In the Spring of 1944 I was transferred to another French cruiser, one of the Alexandria group, and I arrived with a glowing testimonial from my former Captain, who had become charmingly friendly when he was at last convinced that I did not despise the French Navy. In this ship the process I have previously described was reversed. Starting in high favour, I gradually became more and more unwelcome, and especially so to the officer with whom I had the most frequent dealings, namely the signals officer, who bitterly resented that a part

[2] Especially in these pages, where it could not fail to incur the censure of the Warden of All Souls.

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of his normal functions had to be performed by me. General de Gaulle, on the other hand, gained ground while I was in this ship. He was in conflict with the British in Syria and we heard an (for me) embarrassing broadcast in which he was publicly rebuked by Eden and told to keep out. This seemed to suggest that he must really have the interests of France at heart after all. But whatever the wardroom's attitude may have been, the petty officers and ratings of this ship regarded me as a sort of Father Christmas on account of the facilities I procured for them of provisioning themselves at the NAAFI. It was, in fact, part of my duties to do this, but I could never get them to believe it, and they persisted in regarding their NAAFI purchases as though they were my personal gift.

THERE WAS ONE particularly painful incident when, for some reason, I was the only person on board authorised to land at Syracuse, where we called for a few hours. I was entrusted with the task of ordering a cask of wine for the crew. (French sailors maintain that it is only from wine, and it must be red, that they get the strength to work. A sensible prejudice.) I got in touch with Thos. Cook's agent, who was delighted to see an Englishman, regarding me no doubt as a symbol of renascent tourism, and he arranged for the enormous cask to be brought out to us in a boat. By the time it arrived the cruiser was weighing anchor and on the point of sailing. The French being at that time extremely bitter against the Italians, no effort was made to find the purser and we moved out of the harbour without paying, while the wine-seller gesticulated from his little boat. This was thought to be a good joke, and as we never returned to Syracuse I greatly fear the matter must have ended there. Knowing very little about naval accountancy, I have often tried to believe I am wrong; but, whether or no, I could cite examples of equally mean behaviour, or worse, on the part of both British and Americans during the war.

I FINALLY disembarked from this cruiser at Naples in the Summer of 1945, some time after the end of the war in Europe. During nearly two years of psychological strain and social ups and downs in the French Navy I had been a passive spectator at the almost bloodless "liberation" of Corsica in 1943 and the almost equally bloodless landings in the south of France in 1944.[3] One of our contributions to the latter was a bombardment of the harbour of Cannes. An obvious target appeared to be a concentration of armoured vehicles on the quay, but we learned afterwards that we had damaged some of the Cannes municipal dust-carts. For all this I received two promotions and a *Croix de Guerre*. When I recollect that during 1944 we were frequently alongside at Mers-el-Kebir and that our gangway was precisely opposite the monument to the French sailors killed by Admiral Somerville's bombardment, and that I was his scapegoat, I feel that perhaps I did really deserve both the medal and the promotions. Anyway, I was in a state verging on nervous collapse when I finally disembarked at Naples.

One of my saddest and most touching memories of those two years in the Mediterranean is of a visit, at Toulon, to the wife of my first French Captain. We had parted on such very good terms that it was unthinkable not to call on his family. Two little children with arms and legs like match-sticks came running down the garden path shouting *"Papa! Papa!"* Then Madame D. appeared and told them who I was, explaining to me that it was a long time since they had seen their father. She was a graceful, fair young woman, and not the less beautiful for the enormous tell-tale dark hollows under her eyes. It was a dreadful reminder of what life had been like in the south of France while her husband and I were sailing around the Mediterranean in a well-provisioned ship.

I have also an ironic memory of how we celebrated the end of the war. We were in Toulon, where the windows of newspaper offices were full of photographs of starved corpses in concentration camps, French women with their heads shaved for having slept with German soldiers, and close-ups of the faces of alleged collaborators a moment before being shot.

On the very day of the German surrender we received orders to sail immediately to the Algerian coast to bombard some Kabyle territory where an insurrection had broken out, with the massacre of hundreds of Frenchmen. The irony was not lost upon the French sailors, who shouted as our guns boomed: *"Vive la paix!* BOUM! *"Vive la paix!"*

[3] "Our fleet, with all its naval guns, rushed to the support of the troops." (De Gaulle, *War Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 288). It is true, we went as fast as we could.

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Herbert Read

What is There Left to Say?

THE editors will perhaps allow me to begin by saying that this is a commissioned article. It may be that some people like to indulge in a "what-might-have-been" about themselves or their careers, but though I admit the possible interest of such an exercise if one may assume an interest in what the writer has actually become, it is in my case a demand for self-examination which I undertake with a suspicion that it is not likely to be either honest or objective. It is only human to suppose that we have been moulded by circumstances beyond our control; and every age considers its circumstances peculiarly unpropitious. Nevertheless I begin with the supposition that no other span of half a century in the history of mankind can offer quite such an unremitting interference with normal development as that which includes the two world wars experienced by men of my generation. It is not only the direct impact of such wars, but also all they involve by way of regimentation and taxation. Taxation, in particular, I see as the main cause of our growing pains. Since the age of twenty-five I seem to have been expending my main energies in a vain effort to catch up with the mounting demands of the State; and what has been a personal misery for the individual has been a disaster for our joint efforts in the arts. Has any other civilisation collected income tax on the earnings of its poets?

The State, no doubt, is my scapegoat for a sense of frustration; and a very seductive goat it can be, offering security, responsibility, honours. That is the first mistake one makes: to compromise with authority. But the kind of gesture that a Rousseau or a Thoreau could make is no longer possible—for the simple reason that a modern state "liquidates" its Rousseaus and Thoreaus. Thoreau would be imprisoned as a vagrant and a tax-evader; Rousseau, who was sufficiently persecuted by the society of his own time, would have nowhere to seek a refuge—he would probably be sent, as Ezra Pound was sent, to a state institution for mental defectives. Even if you have money, or can make money by writing best-sellers, it is a vain illusion to think that you can escape. I knew of a man who about 1933 sold his business and bought an estate on an island in the Pacific; ten years later the United States made the island a naval base, subject to bombardment from Japanese planes. In any case, there is no escape from our predicament. Every writer who retires to an Aegean island, or the Californian desert, or even to nearer and relatively tax-free countries like Switzerland, thereafter undergoes a subtle process of degeneration. It is not necessarily a physical degeneration: it has little to do with climate or *dolce fa niente*. It is the workings of a remorse for the desertion of the front line in the cultural battle, a battle that must be waged in the thick of our fragmented and alienated societies. Our poetic virtues must lie, if anywhere, in "the interpretation of the time," and to interpret the time we must be part of it.

If stoical endurance (with "beat" undertones) must be our choice, we cannot be sentimental about the consequences. The arts fight a losing battle in our technological civilisation, and I see no hope for them. The poet has become an anachronism. He does not possess even the entertainment value of a clown. His verse is read by a diminishing number of fellow-poets, and the Arts Council and the BBC present him with a few leaves of artificial laurel. Solemnly to entertain the idea of a poetic career is an absurdity. Let us dismiss it.

WHAT is there left to say? The only fair question is whether, in these circumstances, I was allowed to develop the potentialities of my nature. "Allowed" is, of course, a question-begging word, but this is

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a question-begging article. I was not "allowed" any of the privileges to which my nature might have entitled me. I was, I believe, lucky in my birthplace, and the first ten years of my life were blissfully happy. Then came the first of those cataclysmic events that disturb the normal course of development: the death of my father, the sudden transition to traumatic experiences in a boarding-school for orphans, the slow climb through parental deprivation and adolescent poverty to the precarious ledge of a provincial university. Then the second cataclysm, the First World War in which I was immediately involved.

All this I have described in *The Annals of Innocence and Experience* and I do not wish to indulge in any kind of self-pity. But one possibility should perhaps enter into these speculations. At Leeds I studied economics under Arthur Greenwood, and vague political ambitions were stirring within me. Through Greenwood I might have been drawn into the Labour Movement. A political career is a conceivable might-have-been, but my poetic sensibility had drawn me, not to the Labour Party, but to Guild Socialism. I found William Morris and Kropotkin more inspiring than Keir Hardie and Ramsay Macdonald. But even Guild Socialism might have been a career. At the end of the summer term of 1914 a possible future was beginning to take shape. In another year I would have taken my degree; then I would have made my way to London to write for the *New Age* (Orage, its editor, came from Leeds and I already knew several of his friends) and for *The Guildsman*, the periodical founded by G. D. H. Cole. These periodicals did not pay their contributors, but in other ways I would have made a living compatible with these political ambitions.

I should perhaps explain why I was drawn to Kropotkin and Guild Socialism rather than to Marx and Communism. I read *Capital* in 1914 and many other writings of the same tendency. I was never anti-Marxist in the sense of rejecting the theory of surplus-value or dialectical materialism in general; but I could not cast off my agrarian heritage, and Marxism always seemed to me to be a political philosophy for the industrial proletariat. Morris and Kropotkin, by contrast, were on the side of the agricultural worker and the craftsman, and attributed most of our social evils to mechanisation. By every instinct and reason I was on their side of this great historical argument. Useless, therefore, to contemplate an alternative career as a Communist. It is only when I see Communism swayed by a peasantry, as it is to-day in Jugoslavia and China, that my sympathies are engaged.

To continue for a moment with this might-have-been, let us assume that I had successfully graduated in the summer of 1915. Let us suppose I had then decided to seek my fortune in London, and had made contact with Orage. He would have received me and helped me, as he did later on, and I might quickly have found a footing as a literary journalist. But then a void immediately presents itself. Orage would already have been in touch with Ouspensky; for some time he had been absorbed in theosophy and the *Bhagavad Gita*; as editor of the *New Age* he would have met Gurdjieff and Major Douglas. So that imaginary career leads inevitably in a direction I could not have followed (after the war Orage was to ask me to become a disciple of Ouspensky, but after a trial-run of a dozen lectures I turned away). As for Cole, he evidently was bent on an academic career, and though he never wholly renounced the principles of Guild Socialism, he had a conception of realism that after the war allowed him to compromise with a very different kind of socialism or with no socialism at all. I imagine that but for the war the Guild Socialist movement would have grown: I don't for a moment suppose that it would have provided me with a career. But there would have been a beginning, for me as for Richard Aldington or F. S. Flint or any young and impoverished intellectual of the time. It would have been a good moment to be alive. Difficult as it is to recapture after all these years, there was a ferment even in England in those pre-war years—the ferment out of which sprang such strange growths as Ezra Pound's *Cantos* and T. S. Eliot's *The*

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Waste Land, Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. The war did not cause this ferment: it almost washed it away.

I believe that this would have been a better because a more normal development: that I should have been poorer for longer, and perhaps have suffered more. There would have been more competition: not T. E. Hulme alone, but many bright young rivals who perished in that desolating war. We should have sorted ourselves out into groups, as we did with our diminished numbers after the war; but the grouping would have been different. Incalculable the difference that Hulme's survival would have made; even Rupert Brooke, we may be sure, would have grown up, and the *English Review* under Ford Madox Ford's editorship might have been the focus for our cultural revolution.

MIGHT have been! In one sense the war had changed nothing. Cubism, expressionism, futurism, imagism—all these movements, or aspects of the one revolution of sensibility, had been born before the war and survived it. But in the purely physical sense it changed everything, firstly because the younger generation was decimated, and the few who survived were spiritually disillusioned. It was difficult to believe that art was of any importance in the world of Clemenceau and Lloyd George, and we had not to wait long before our *"semblables"* in Russia were fleeing from a tyranny worse than the one they had helped to destroy. We were also changed by the actual experience of war. To come back to my own case, which is the purpose of this essay, I still do not know whether the thing I stepped on in August, 1914, was a snake's head or a ladder. Materially it could be thought of as a ladder, for it gave me four years of material security (under the constant threat of death and the daily presence of suffering). Such an "ordeal by fire" no doubt gave me a self-confidence that would have taken longer to acquire in civil life. But at the end it left me with a pathetic longing for security. I have never written about the real horror of fighting, which is not death nor the fear of mutilation, discomfort or filth, but a psychopathic state of hallucination in which the world becomes unreal and you no longer *know* whether your experience is valid—in other words, whether you are any longer sane. In the spring of 1919, demobilised, the spirit of adventure, in any physical sense, was exhausted. One was grateful to recover reality in the shape of the blood-money (war gratuity) given to us on demobilisation. With that one could make a new beginning. "Reconstruction" was the word we were told to repeat. Eliot used to sing a ballad entitled "The Reconstructed Rebel" and that seemed to express our mood of disillusionment. Arthur Greenwood offered me a post in the Ministry of Labour; I accepted and became a committee-man. I married and with my gratuity paid the deposit on a little house in the suburbs. I remember one day telling Osbert Sitwell—we were crossing Trafalgar Square and I could go to the very spot to-day—that I was going to be married. He stopped and stood with a look of great distress on his face, as though I had told him I was about to commit suicide. He was a little older than I was, and perhaps wiser. He told me that I was making a serious mistake—that the poet must remain free, eternally free—that marriage was economic servitude and spiritual death.

But celibacy also is a spiritual death. We deceive ourselves if we think we can plan our lives against the grain of our physical dispositions. The experience of war left me a fatalist: with Heraclitus I became convinced that "war and Zeus are the same thing"—in other words, that conflict is the ultimate condition of everything, and particularly this conflict between the disposition of the individual and the circumstances of his time. My life has been guided by chance, and that I accept as a natural condition. The people I tend to dislike are those who have successfully planned their careers: there is no conflict or contradiction in them because they have imposed a human ideal (of logic, of purpose, of consistency) on the divine irresponsibility.

This Heraclitean principle of flux, of chance, of fortuity issues out of the tragedy of war, and is basic to my anarchism and

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romanticism. It is a point of view for which only that philosopher of planning, Karl Mannheim, ever showed any real understanding. That I can combine anarchism with order (for I have been a good committeeman), a philosophy of strife with pacifism, an orderly life (beatniks and bohemians give me the creeps) with romanticism and revolt in art and literature—all this is inevitably scandalous to the conventional philosopher. This principle of flux, the Keatsian notion of "negative capability," justifies everything I have done (or not done) in my life, everything I have written, every attack and defence. I hate all monolithic systems, all logical categories, all pretences to truth and inevitability. The sun is new every day.

A fatalistic philosophy should imply more resignation than I have shown. But fatalism does not imply inactivity: on the contrary, since we are counters in a child's game, we are condemned to action. It is in changing, as Heraclitus said, that things find repose. I have called my politics "the politics of the unpolitical," but I have striven for change, even for revolution. My understanding of the history of culture has convinced me that the ideal society is a point on a receding horizon. We move steadily towards it but can never reach it. Nevertheless we must engage with passion in the immediate strife—such is the nature of things and if defeat is inevitable (as it is) we are not excused. The only excusable indifference is that of Zeus, the divine indifference.

I DESPAIR when I think of John Ruskin, for he was a man endowed with sense and sensibility, energy and leisure, who throughout a long life-time fought for the values I have fought for with eloquence and passionate clarity, and in the end was utterly defeated. The younger generations no longer read him and their elders no longer teach them to read him. His numerous works are the cheapest remnants in the boxes reserved for books that nobody will even steal. Yet what Ruskin has to say, about civilisation and culture, about art and literature, about politics and economics, is still relevant to the problems of our own time. The evils and wrongs he denounced have continued to flourish since he died sixty years ago, a sad and demented old man.

Does it therefore serve any purpose, I have often said to myself (and others have said to me) to fight the same battle with my inferior weapons and without Ruskin's security and leisure? Such questions are never answered, for the reason I have given: there is no rational issue to our strife. I know I have wasted my energies in this vain and bitter struggle, only to see the black claws of an industrial civilisation spread over whatever beauty was left in England when Ruskin died. I know it is absurd to oppose the overwhelming forces of technology, usury, philistinism, all aspects of the rationalism that pervades every aspect of modern civilisation. But though this is the common-sense and condemnatory view of my life, I know that it could not have been otherwise, and that the battle which Ruskin engaged must be continually renewed—or we retreat into despair, silence, or some "Dirt-dump" like *Finnegans Wake*.

To imagine an ideal career, therefore, is to imagine an unreal civilisation in which this career can unfold. We do not live in a golden age, or even in the silver age of the Augustans: to flatter ourselves we may call it an age of steel, but it is an age of gas, of atomisation. Creative artists are oppressed by a sense of the immense futility of their efforts. This is true of even the most successful of them: indeed, success on the scale of a Picasso is always accompanied by a corroding cynicism. The talent (for genius is innocent) of a Faulkner, a Graham Greene, a Salinger, a Vladimir Nabokov, derives its energy from an obsessive hatred of the civilisation it depicts. This is not less true of Joyce, Eliot, Brecht, Beckett: they all write out of *ressentiment* (in Max Scheler's sense of the term). I was born with an innocence which is abashed by such cynicism, and for this reason alone I must retire into silence, or into the sacrificial busy-ness of committees. There is a poem of Yeats' not often quoted that well expresses my own condition—"The Curse of Cromwell" —in which he imagines the lovers and dancers

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of another age "beaten into clay," "all neighbourly content and easy talk are gone."

But there's no good complaining, for money's rant is on
He that's mounting up must on his neighbour mount,
And we and all the Muses are things of no account.

But then the poet realises there is another knowledge that proves things both can and cannot be. We can still be the servant of those ladies and swordsmen; though they are underground they will still pay us for a verse. He dreams of a great house,

Its open lighted doorway and its windows all alight,
And all my friends were there and made me welcome too;

but this is the illusion, the dream of a ceremony of innocence that has gone for ever; for when Yeats woke he found himself

. . . in an old ruin that the winds howled through;
And when I pay attention I must out and walk
Among the dogs and horses that understand my talk.

As I relate this fable the pattern of my cloud-cuckoo-land becomes clearer. I never met Ralph Hodgson, but I have always respected his name and in my early verse was much influenced by him. He went out and walked among the dogs and horses that understood his talk, and was not heard of for forty years. Recently someone who had visited him on his farm in Ohio told me that his material circumstances were not good, and it seems that the swordsmen and the ladies did not often keep him company, or pay for a verse. But I think his decision was the right one, and now I fancy that if I had my life over again I would return to the dogs and horses that waited on my father and forefathers for uncounted generations. This, of course, will seem a sentimental and evasive solution to the problem of the poet in a fragmented civilisation; but I don't intend the alternative in any spirit of escapism. Ralph Hodgson has not been a "gentleman farmer" and I would not want to be one myself. Nor would I want to be the kind of farmer who sits in an office and directs the activities of a group of tractor-drivers. Tractor-drivers would not understand my talk. C. F. Ramuz and Jean Giono have lived natural lives and they too are writers who have written as I would like to have written, and have yet lived in contact not only with peasants and animals, but with other creative spirits—Ramuz collaborated with Stravinsky, for example, and Giono is not an escapist: his work is a challenge to our sophisticated values.

Sooner or later the dogs and the horses will return, as in Edwin Muir's impressive poem; either they will return, restoring the ceremonies of innocence, or the civilisation so much admired by Sir Charles Snow will blow itself up. It is not a question of sentimentality or of nostalgia. Life is not mechanic: it is dogs and horses, roots and branches, seeds, seminal fluids, growth and form. It is these things basically, and above these are "the lovers and the dancers," the celebrants of a culture.

O what of that, O what of that,
What is there left to say?

This is the refrain to "The Curse of Cromwell" and it is the conclusion of this meditation on the mind behind the mask.

While meditating I received the latest issue of the *Evergreen Review*, an incongruously-named periodical, for it is as parched and crinkled as the leaf in Eugenio Montale's poem:

. . . l'incartocciarsi della foglia riarsa . . .

But these parched and crinkled leaves are the laurels of the beatniks and the jazz-addicts, of the action-painters and the Californian buddhists, and it is towards a last phase of disintegration that the course of our despairing poets and artists is now set. I see no other path in California, or in Paris or in London. In the people's communes in China I saw poems written by peasants and pinned up on the notice-board in the village hall; no doubt not very good poems, but *millions* of them are written among the pigs and the water-buffaloes and from such a ferment an essence will remain. Meanwhile, there is only Montale's image of *"la divina Indifferenza"*:

There by the statue in the drowsy sun
At noon, and the cloud, and the heaven-climbing hawk.

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A Craving for Hell

Nietzsche & the Nietzscheans — By MICHAEL HAMBURGER

THE MISUSE of Nietzsche's name by Nazi propagandists, and hence by anti-Nazi propagandists, must have something to do with his eclipse in the English-speaking countries, where, far from profiting by the general acclamation of D. H. Lawrence as a prophet and moral reformer, his work seems to be less widely known and effective now than in the early years of the century. Even if his impact here was never as strong or immediate as his impact on the Continent, a tremor in the atmosphere rather than an earthquake, that tremor can be felt in the works of W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, T. E. Hulme and Wyndham Lewis, in the circle around A. R. Orage and other groups representative of "advanced" opinion up to the thirties.

At least one English writer, Walter Pater, was among that élite whose recognition established Nietzsche as an international figure when he was scarcely read in Germany; and it is important to remember that this recognition in the last years of his active life by Georg Brandes, Strindberg, and Taine meant more to Nietzsche himself than any response his works might have evoked—but did not evoke at the time—in his own country.

Yet in a sense Nietzsche is with us whether we read him or not. It is no exaggeration to say that he anticipated almost every distinct trend in twentieth century thought, including not only the religions of Art, on the one hand, Life, on the other, but depth psychology, phenomenalism and existentialism, logical positivism and linguistic analysis.[1] Indeed, only Nietzsche's demolition of metaphysics marks the place where all these trends originated before their divergence. Nietzsche was delighted when a hostile critic described his work as dynamite. Whatever its part in the explosions of recent decades, we have no reason to assume that it could not have been put to a very different use, or that all its force is now spent.

[1] *E.g.*, in the aphorism (*Morgenröte*, I, 46) headed: "Words get in our way."

The precise way in which Nietzsche's works have been exploited, distorted and deliberately falsified is only now being revealed to the general public in Germany, though it has long been suspected by some, and known to other, specialists. Professor Karl Schlechta, the editor of a new three-volume edition of Nietzsche's selected works and letters, made a start by exposing an astonishing number of plain forgeries by Nietzsche's sister, who was responsible for the early editions of Nietzsche's posthumous works and letters. Schlechta also aroused much controversy by rearranging the aphorisms and fragments known as *The Will to Power* and claiming that this was an arbitrary compilation of material rejected by Nietzsche. Professor Schlechta's editing, in turn, has been severely censured and in part invalidated by several Nietzsche experts, including Dr. Erich F. Podach, the author of admirable Nietzsche studies like *The Madness of Nietzsche* (English version 1931). Unlike Schlechta, Podach has based his new edition of Nietzsche's late works on the first-hand material at Weimar; and he differs from Schlechta in shifting a good deal of the blame from Nietzsche's sister to her academically trained assistants, co-editors and successors at the original *Nietzsche-Archiv*. This, understandably, was dissolved by the East German authorities after the war; but Podach testifies that all the contents are available once more, even to Western scholars, in the *Goethe-Schiller Archiv* at Weimar.

SCHLECHTA'S Nietzsche researches began in the Nazified Archive of the thirties and forties; and since his experiences there seem to have disgusted him not only with the political exploitation of Nietzsche, but with Nietzsche himself, it has been suggested that he should never have undertaken an edition of Nietzsche at all. Yet Podach, too, is by no means a wholehearted Nietzschean; and, considering that the whole-hearted Nietzschean is not only a very dubious phenomenon but a contradiction in terms, Schlechta's disenchantment should not

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be held against him. Nietzsche, after all, did not forbear from writing about Schopenhauer or Wagner when these had become his antagonists. Schlechta's re-editing of the so-called *Will to Power*, and his exclusion of other posthumous works, have rightly been called in question, but his exposure of the sister's forgeries—bearing mainly on Nietzsche's life, his relations with his family and herself especially, but also on his political opinions and the text of several of his works—remains valid, even if we accept Podach's argument that she could not have got away with these forgeries without the collusion of her scholarly friends, some of whom were guilty of even graver offences against the spirit, if not the letter, of Nietzsche's works.[2] Podach's comments and epilogue[3] are frankly polemical and include a brilliant parody of existentialist obfuscations of Nietzsche *à la* Heidegger, as well as selected quotations from other interpreters of Nietzsche during the Nazi era. Of one of them, Professor F. W. Otto, Podach writes that "he abandoned the study of myths in favour of their fabrication, embellished with pseudo-scholarly frills." The recent controversy may not yet amount to a transvaluation of Nietzsche, but even its asperity is a healthy sign after the pieties of the myth-makers.

THERE IS NO DOUBT at all that Nietzsche planned a work to be called *The Will to Power*, which was to be an attempt "to transvaluate all values." As one of Schlechta's critics, Karl Löwith, points out, Schlechta's pronounced antipathy to this work is largely due to the prominence given to it by the political traducers of Nietzsche, and Löwith cites Nietzsche's own endeavour to forestall such abuse in one of the notes that are part of the projected work:

> *The Will to Power*. A book to *stimulate thought*, no more—it belongs to those who enjoy thinking, no more... That it's written in German is an anachronism, to put it mildly. I wish I had written it in French, so that it could not be used to support German nationalist aspirations of any kind. The Germans of to-day have ceased to be thinkers: what they enjoy and what impresses them is something quite different. The will to power as a principle would be understandable enough to them.

True enough, it was the principle of power that was taken up and distorted, Nietzsche's qualifications and warnings that were ignored.

Podach is right, of course, in suggesting that, shocking though many of them are, the sister's forgeries alone neither explain nor make possible the exploitation of Nietzsche for political ends. A complete investigation of how this abuse became possible would have to include a biography of Nietzsche, a study of his relations and friends (as already provided by Podach in earlier books), a cultural history of Germany from Nietzsche's birth in 1844 to about a century later, a survey of the entire body of Nietzsche criticism, and a careful re-examination of all his works and letters on the lines laid down by Podach for the works of the Turin period. Even then a host of ambiguities and contradictions would remain; for it was Nietzsche's peculiarity and distinction to resist the systematisation of thought. That is one reason why his works remain uniquely stimulating, inexhaustible—and dangerous.

Needless to say, no such multiple investigation will be attempted here, though a few historical flashbacks will prove indispensable; and in the case of a writer whose thought flowed so directly out of his life, who was consistent only in being unreservedly true to his own nature and his own moods, it is absurd to argue, as Heidegger did, that the biographical approach is outdated and irrelevant. Nietzsche himself claimed that only what is personal remains forever incontrovertible; and he foresaw what might happen if his works were to be taken as impersonal dogma by men incapable of treating him as sceptically as he treated other self-proclaimed leaders of men.

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche: *Werke in drei Bänden*. Edited by Karl Schlechta. (Munich, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954–1956.)

Only a few details can be given here. According to Schlechta, the letters of Nietzsche to his sister of February 22nd, March 23rd, and December 26th, 1887, are forgeries by her. The same applies to the letters dated January 25th and March 31st, 1888.

All these letters serve to put Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche in a favourable light, to obscure their true relationship and suggest that he regarded her as well qualified to deal with his works.

Rudolf Steiner, who gave her private lessons in philosophy from 1896 to 1898, testifies that even at that time she showed no true understanding of her brother's works and was incapable of "an independent judgment of his simplest ideas." In one of the forged letters she attributes these words to Nietzsche: "You understand more about me than the others."

The forged letter dated May 3rd, 1888, serves to falsify Nietzsche's attitude to the Wagnerians and to the Jews. Another, dated End of October, 1888, attributes to him an admiration for the new Kaiser (Wilhelm II) which Nietzsche was far from professing. An attack on the same Kaiser's combination of militarism with Christian piety in the MS. of Nietzsche's *Der Antichrist* was deliberately obscured by the omission of a word.

The true relations between Nietzsche and his sister in October, 1888, are attested by a letter to him in which she wrote that it looked as though he were about to become famous, and added: "A fine lot of scum it will be that believes in *you*."

[3] Erich F. Podach: *Friedrich Nietzsches Werke des Zusammenbruchs* (Heidelberg, Wolfgang Rothe Verlag, 1961).

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Even in the last euphoric and hubristic phase immediately before his mental collapse, he could write in a letter:

> I decidedly do not wish to appear to men as a prophet, savage beast and moral monster. Even in this respect the book (*Ecce Homo*) could do some good; it may save me from being confused with my anti-self.[4]

THE NIETZSCHEAN—that solecism, as Mr. F. A. Lea aptly called him[5]—is any reader of Nietzsche who ignorantly, slavishly or dishonestly takes Nietzsche's anti-self for the whole man, or its manic utterances for the whole of Nietzsche's doctrine. That Nietzsche quite frequently forgot or perversely disregarded the warning contained in that late letter, claiming an absolute authority for himself and boasting of his ferocious predatory strength, merely testifies to the war between his self and anti-self. Only a dialectic confrontation of both, which is bound to draw on Nietzsche's biography and letters, can undo the mischief done by his sister, her scholarly abettors and all those Nietzscheans deficient in what Nietzsche himself called the ultimate virtue, the will to honesty. "How much truth can a human mind bear, how much truth does it dare to face?" Nietzsche asked in *Ecce Homo*. His disciples, it seems, could bear very little of the truth about their master because they could face very little of the truth about themselves.

Unlike most philosophers, and like most poets, Nietzsche presents experiences, observations, and imaginings to be shared rather than believed. Again and again he cautions his reader not to mistake the one kind of participation for the other, to accept only what his own experience confirms. Even the first book of *Zarathustra*, the least analytical of Nietzsche's works, closes with such a caution:

> You say you believe in Zarathustra? But what does Zarathustra matter? You are my believers: but what do any beliefs matter?
>
> You had not looked for yourselves: then you found me. That is what all believers do: that is why belief is worth so little.
>
> Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and not till all of you have denied me will I return to you.

The Nazi School of Falsification

EVEN the briefest explanation of the Nietzscheans' victory over Nietzsche would have to go back as far as the year 1882, when at the age of 37 Nietzsche met the one woman who tempted him to renounce his solitude, and proposed marriage to Lou Salomé. The intrigues of his sister and mother against Lou and Nietzsche's Jewish friend Paul Rée, who was also in love with Lou but acted as mediator between them, to the point of conveying Nietzsche's proposal to her, helped to bring about Nietzsche's estrangement from both friends and to drive him close to suicide.

"I don't like my mother," he wrote in the following year, "and to hear my sister's voice is disagreeable to me; their company has always made me ill." Soon, of course, Nietzsche was to make his peace again with both his mother and sister whom, with an ambivalence characteristic of all his emotional and intellectual attachments, he at once loved and hated. In 1883 also, Nietzsche's sister became engaged to an extreme German nationalist, Bernhard Förster, who in April 1881 had addressed a petition to Bismarck demanding restrictive measures against the Jews.

"This accursed anti-Semitism is the cause of a drastic rupture between me and my sister," Nietzsche wrote in 1884. Many of the letters forged by Nietzsche's sister served to suppress all hints of such a conflict, even to suggest that Nietzsche admired Förster and approved his views.

The conflicts and reconciliations with his family never wholly ceased until Nietzsche's breakdown on January 3, 1889; and there is no lack of forged documents for these years also, though in 1886 Förster and his wife emigrated to administer a German colony in Paraguay. One of Nietzsche's last gestures before his mental collapse was a declaration of war against the German Reich; and his famous last letter to Jacob Burckhardt of January 5, 1889, includes the laconic communiqué:

> Wilhelm, Bismarck and all anti-Semites abolished.

Nietzsche's total incapacity from this time until his death on August 25, 1900, to attend to the editing of his still unpublished works meant that some of these[6]—and they make up about one half of his *opus*—could also be tampered with. From October 1889 (when Nietzsche was in an asylum at Jena) till February of the following

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[4] Letter of 30/10/1889. I render "Gegensatz" by the Yeatsian "anti-self" because this best conveys the antithesis Nietzsche had in mind.

[5] F. A. Lea: *The Tragic Philosopher*. A Study of Friedrich Nietzsche (Methuen, 1957).

[6] Thus Podach shows that of the nine poems published by Nietzsche's sister, and subsequent editors, as *Dionysus-Dithyramben*, only seven were included by Nietzsche in this projected work. The poem *Ruhm und Ewigkeit* was intended to conclude *Ecce Homo*, and Podach has restored it to its proper context. The ninth poem, *Von der Armut des Reichsten*, was intended to conclude *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, and has been similarly restored in Podach's edition. Schlecta prints both poems as *Dionysus-Dithyramben*.

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year, another extreme Nationalist and anti-Semite, Julius Langbehn, attempted to obtain the exclusive control not only of Nietzsche himself, whom he guaranteed to cure, but also of Nietzsche's works and papers. The attempt was frustrated only by Langbehn's rudeness and truculence which finally alienated Nietzsche's mother and enabled Nietzsche's friends Overbeck and Gast to exert their influence against him. Nietzsche's mother was afraid that Langbehn would take his revenge in a polemic against Nietzsche modelled on Nietzsche's own *The Wagner Case*, just as Langbehn had parodied an early work of Nietzsche's, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, in his notorious book *Rembrandt as Educator*. Nietzsche, as it happened, was not to become a case until Schlechta used the title for a book occasioned by the current controversy.[7]

With exemplary devotion, but also with a certain gratification at having her prodigal son restored to her, Nietzsche's mother nursed and guarded him until her death in 1897. (This phase has been thoroughly documented by Podach in two earlier books.[8]) In September 1893 Nietzsche's sister returned to Germany—Förster had committed suicide in 1889 because of the failure of his colonial venture—and ordered Peter Gast, who had acted as Nietzsche's literary executor, to break off his edition of Nietzsche's works. Towards the end of 1893 she forced her mother to renounce all rights in Nietzsche's works and soon after founded the *Nietzsche-Archiv* at Weimar, of which she remained the titular head until her death in 1935.

ELISABETH FÖRSTER-NIETZSCHE professed herself a Conservative, or rather a *Deutsch-Nationale*, as what remained of German Conservatism significantly called itself in her time. A few extracts from the recently published diaries of Count Kessler[9] will serve to show how, with her connivance, the Nietzsche Archive came to be taken over by the Nazis even before their rise to power:

Weimar, 11 Feb. 1926

In the afternoon at Frau Förster-Nietzsche's. She burst out with the question, did I know of her latest great friendship—with Mussolini? I said, yes I had heard of it and regretted it; for Mussolini was compromising her brother.

Weimar, 5 Oct. 1927

Called on Frau Förster-Nietzsche. Understandably enough, she was completely preoccupied with the imminent Nietzsche celebration at which Spengler was to give a lecture.... She went on to talk of her "dear friend Mussolini," who was the comfort of her old age.... In complete contradiction of this passion for Mussolini she professed herself in favour of a "United States of Europe" which her brother had been the first to demand.

13 Oct. 1927

Unfortunately one feels the petit-bourgeois element, so incompatible with Nietzsche, in everything about her. For instance, in her repeated assertion that she is a "Colonial German" (she hasn't been out of Germany for thirty years) and therefore couldn't be anything but *"deutsch-national."* (When she was in Paraguay, of course, there was no such thing as a *"Deutsch-nationale"* Party, and the old Conservatives wanted the whole body of her brother's writings to be pulped; in fact the *Kreuzzeitung* demanded that the Police should confiscate copies in private libraries). It is painful to listen to such nonsense from Nietzsche's sister in the Nietzsche Archives.

15 Oct. 1927

The hall was packed... many had to stand; but Spengler's lecture turned into a *débâcle*. Spengler has actually succeeded in making Nietzsche boring. Only a few funny blunders redeemed the drabness of that hour. In England, he said, philosophers had never given any thought to the State "because England is not a State"! (Hobbes' *Leviathan*, etc., didn't exist; or more probably Spengler has never heard of Hobbes and his successors).... It is a deplorable disgrace to the Nietzsche Archives to have allowed this half-educated charlatan to speak. The lecture was so insipid that even Frau Förster must have had doubts about her Spengler. Perhaps he's the first Nietzsche priest. But God preserve us from that species....

22 Oct. 1927

Lunched with Frau Förster-Nietzsche. . . . She reminisced about her years in Paraguay and the horrors perpetrated under the dictatorship of Lopez; stories that sounded like something by Hudson or Cunningham-Grahame: the shooting of whole companies who had buried treasures at his orders, so that there would be no survivors to give away the place.... Then she told me that she had effected a complete reconciliation with Bayreuth. Last year, during the festival season here for Siegfried Wagner, Countess Gravina had begun by putting out feelers and then the whole Wagner family had paid her a visit; she had given a luncheon for them, at which the reconciliation was solemnly celebrated by a symbolic holding of hands around the table while she read out her brother's *"Sternenfreundschaft."* . . . So ends the great world-shaking feud between Richard Wagner and Nietzsche, at the coffee table: prettily and quite in the style of either's disciples.

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[7] Karl Schlechta: *Der Fall Nietzsche* (Munich, Karl Hanser, 1958).

[8] *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch* (Heidelberg, 1930) and *Der Kranke Nietzsche: Briefe seiner Mutter an Overbeck* (Vienna, 1937).

[9] Hary Graf Kessler: *Tagebücher 1918–1937* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1961).

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7 Aug. 1932

In the afternoon at Frau Förster-Nietzsche's. The Nietzsche Archive, as she herself says, is now "at the centre of politics." As its director they have appointed a Nazi, Professor Emge from Jena, a professor of jurisprudence who is even a prospective Nazi Minister in the Thuringian government. In the Archives all, from the Major (her nephew) to the manservant, are Nazis. Only she herself, she says, remains *"deutsch-national."*

She told me how Hitler had visited her after the first night of Mussolini's play in the *National-Theater*. While several Italian foreign correspondents were sitting with her, he had had himself announced and entered with an enormous bouquet of flowers, accompanied by his staff.... The *Nietzsche-Archiv* at least profits materially by its fascism, since Mussolini, Frau Förster told me, had made it a present of twenty thousand lire towards the end of last year. For next Thursday the "Empress" Hermine has invited herself to tea with her.... To think what's become of Nietzsche and the Nietzsche Archive is enough to make one weep.... And that this old woman of 86 is courted by the most powerful man in Germany and the wife of the former Kaiser. The latter is almost grotesque after His Majesty's attitude to Nietzsche before the war! In this connection she tells me that the officers of the Reichswehr Divisional Staff posted to Weimar are paying her an official visit. How different it was in my youth at Potsdam when I read Nietzsche with Bernhard Stolberg and my circle. Stolberg was taken away from Potsdam by his father because of this and locked up for six months with a parson.

THE NEXT PHASE of Nietzsche's Nazification, after Hitler's rise to power, is outlined by Podach in his Epilogue. In 1934 the 90th anniversary of Nietzsche's birth was celebrated at Weimar; the *Führer* himself was expected, but it was Alfred Rosenberg who formally opened the proceeding when he was received by Frau Förster, her nephew Major Oehler, and Professor Emge. Fritz Sauckel presided at an address given by Professor W. F. Otto. One brief extract from it will have to suffice here: "Culture has nothing to do with endeavours to make life more beautiful, comfortable, luxurious or, above all, less dangerous. It has a metaphysical meaning...." Another ceremony took place in the following year on the occasion of Frau Förster's death. Hitler himself attended, as well as Baldur von Schirach, Sauckel, and many other representatives of the régime.

The parallel history of Nietzsche literature—editions of his works and letters, critical studies and biographies—is too intricate to permit such summary. Both Schlechta and Podach provide ample information about the deliberate corruption of texts by omission, juxtaposition, and substitution. Apart from her attribution to Nietzsche of letters or parts of letters which he did not write or wrote in a different context, the sister's influential introduction and commentaries are full of blatant misrepresentations. Schlechta's biographical table lists countless examples, beginning with the sister's attempts to suppress or distort certain facts about Nietzsche's heredity; thus the death of his father at the age of 36 of "softening of the brain," the death in infancy of Nietzsche's younger brother, and Nietzsche's own sickly constitution long before his suspected venereal infection or his riding accident on military service. Podach reminds us that Nietzsche himself was quite capable of adapting the facts of his life to the fable, but no sensitive reader of his late works could fail to allow for this even without forewarning. All the biographical evidence merely confirms what the works alone make perfectly clear: that no other great writer has so perfectly exemplified Mr. Edmund Wilson's theory of "the wound and the bow." Nietzsche's works are the record of a struggle—unique in its intensity and excess—between self and anti-self, between his conditioned and his imagined self.

"Amor Fati" and "Schadenfreude"

PODACH sums it all up by citing Herr Rudolf Panwitz's description of Nietzsche's sister as "half Nietzsche, half Naumburg" (their home town after 1850) and pointing out that the description is not wholly inapplicable to Nietzsche himself. Had he been less emotionally dependent on his mother and sister he would have had less need to call himself "the most independent man in Europe," as he did in a letter of 1884, or to become "one of the loneliest men who have ever lived" (F. A. Lea). The more he felt this dependence and recognised how much of Naumburg there was in himself, the more that dependence turned to hatred and self-hatred, and the higher he had to climb to transcend his conditioned self. Because to Nietzsche's gentle, compassionate, and overscrupulous nature, pity became "a kind of hell,"[10] his anti-self glorified hardness and ruthlessness as the liberating virtues. He himself explained it in a letter:

> But till now Schopenhauer's "compassion" has always wrought the worst mischief in my life—and so I have every cause to favour those moralities which include a few other mainsprings in what is morally good and don't try to reduce all our human achievements to "fellow feelings." For this is not only a kind of softness which every large-minded Greek would have laughed at, but a grave practical danger. One should *enforce one's* ideal *of man*, one should impose one's ideal on one's fellow men as on

[10] Letter of 25/12/1882 to Overbeck.

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> oneself, and so act creatively! But this demands that one keep compassion well under control and also treat whatever is contrary to one's ideal (rabble like L. and R., for instance) as *enemies*.—You see *how* I preach to *myself*; but to arrive at this "wisdom" has almost cost me my life.[11]

It may be that Nietzsche's self-knowledge here, as elsewhere, stopped short at the crucial point—the question why compassion was so dangerous to him, or why the woman to whom he had recently proposed marriage must now be described as "rabble." (A little later he was to admit that he had been at fault in the relationship.) Yet Nietzsche was always ready to expose the experiential and personal roots of his beliefs, and to adduce such self-knowledge as he had where other men would have appealed to principles. No amount of forgeries, therefore, could ever obscure the peculiar processes by which Nietzsche arrived at his beliefs.

Because anti-Semitism was part of Naumburg—Nietzsche's mother professed it too, though as a matter of course, like any other conventional sentiment—Nietzsche's anti-anti-Semitism turned into an obsession, much as Naumburg Christianity turned him into nothing less than the self-proclaimed Anti-Christ, or Naumburg nationalism into the most devastating critic of all things German. But because Naumburg anti-Semitism had a Christian, as well as a racialist basis, and Christian ethics had been drawn into the service of nationalism and its cult of power, Nietzsche's attack was divided between several fronts and threatened with a similar confusion. Heine had taught him to see Judaism and Christianity as a single religion of sickness and suffering, as opposed to a pagan "religion of joy." Nietzsche, therefore, could defend the Jews as a race, but could not exempt them from their part in the responsibility for Naumburg protestantism and the Christian "slave morality." Naumburg was servile; Nietzsche, therefore, must advocate the "will to power," aware though he was that this power might easily be confused with that worshipped by the slaves.

THE RACIALISTS, of course, were quick to take up his vision of the "innocent conscience of the beast of prey," the "lasciviously prowling blond beast" and the "raging of the blond Germanic beast" in the *Genealogy of Morals*, conveniently ignoring that this was a vision of the past, to which Nietzsche was careful to add this parenthesis "although there is hardly any affinity of concept, let alone of blood, between the ancient Teutons and us Germans"; also that in attributing the dread aroused by Germany's power to memories of the ancient Germanic hordes, Nietzsche was drawing once more on Heine—in this instance on Heine's famous warning to the French to beware of a resurgent German nation. Nietzsche's vision is quite as ambiguous as Heine's, for very similar reasons; but above all because Nietzsche's "Dionysian imperialism," as it has been called, was never identical with the German imperialism of Naumburg and diametrically opposed to the racialism that grew out of it. Nietzsche always insisted on his—very doubtful and remote—Polish ancestry. In connection with his brother-in-law's colonial ventures he wrote to his mother and sister in 1885: "As for enthusiasm for 'German-ness,' I've hardly ever been able to rise to it, far less to the desire to keep this 'glorious' race pure. On the contrary, on the contrary."

Nietzsche, then, can be absolved of all direct responsibility for what his traducers have made of him by selecting one arc of the circle or failing to recognise that his whole truth lies in his self-contradictions. (Nietzsche explicitly claimed the right to contradict himself in *Human All-too-Human*.) About the particular danger of being turned into a hero of the German nationalists he could not have been more prescient or more outspoken; and, in his last phase especially, he went to extraordinary lengths to dissociate himself not only from German nationalism but from German philosophy and what he regarded as the German mentality:

> In my case, too, the Germans will do all they can to make an immense destiny give birth to a mouse. They have compromised themselves in my person until now, and I doubt that they will do any better in the future. Oh, how I long to be a bad prophet in this instance! . . . Already my natural readers and listeners are Russians, Scandinavians, and Frenchmen—will they always be? The Germans have been inscribed in the history of knowledge with nothing but ambiguous names, they have never produced anything but "unconscious" counterfeiters—Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Schleiermacher deserve this title as much as Kant and Leibniz; they are all mere veil-makers [literal translation of "Schleiermacher"]. . . . They never went through a seventeenth century of rigorous self-examination like the French—a La Rochefoucauld, a Descartes, are a hundred times superior in honesty to the greatest Germans—they have never had a psychologist to this day. But psychology is almost the measure of a people's cleanliness or uncleanliness. . . . And if one isn't even clean, how could one be deep? With a German, almost as with a woman, one never strikes rock bottom; *he has none*: that is all. (But that doesn't even make him shallow. . . .) What is called "deep" in Germany is precisely that uncleanliness of instinct in relation to oneself of which I am speaking: they don't want to be clean about themselves. (*Ecce Homo*.)

[11] Letter of August 1883 to Malwida von Meysenbug.

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This, of course, is true of others beside Germans: and, despite his psychological acumen, Nietzsche too was much more ambiguous than he admits here. The analogy with women is a case in point, because it brings one up against Nietzsche's personal peculiarities—those of a man too inhibited to propose marriage other than by proxy who made up for his deficiencies as a lover with cynical reflections on the inferiority of women, at times with "he-man" fantasies of the whip. Again, his traducers had only to take up the implied analogy between sexual and national psychology to justify a ruthless manipulation of the "feminine" masses and their deliberate self-delusions. Yet Nietzsche's superman castigates weakness not to manipulate it, but to turn it into strength[12]; and his primary concern, in any case, is with his own capacity for self-delusion, his own slavish impulses. As Zarathustra insists, the man who has cured himself of these human foibles is gentle with the sick and generous to the weak.

In the end the intimate connection between Naumburg, Nietzsche, and his sister remains as unmistakable and as inescapable as the young professor's connection with the scholarly and unworldly vicar who was his father. Strangely enough, it is in the last Turin phase, the phase in which Nietzsche exulted in his triumph over the professor he believed himself to have sloughed off for ever, that Naumburg asserts itself once more with a vengeance. In his letters of the time he begins to boast of his little social successes, of his mundane appearance and, above all, of his sound digestion and enjoyment of good meals. (In *Ecce Homo*, written at the time, he remarks that "to keep silent is to object, 'swallowing' things necessarily produces a bad character—it upsets one's digestion. All those who keep silent are dyspeptic.")

It is striking, pathetic, and somewhat shocking, that after his descent from the Alps, the tremendous battles fought out in solitude and the cosmic visions, Nietzsche should celebrate his victory and relaxation in terms that were so well understood at Naumburg. In his mother's letters also the details of meals eaten assume a prominence only rivalled by considerations of piety and social status. True, in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche very cogently defends "little things"—"food, place, climate, relaxation, the whole casuistry of egotism"—as being "incomparably more serious than everything that people have taken seriously until now," metaphysical concepts that "are not even realities, but mere imaginings, more precisely *lies* proceeding from the bad instincts of sick, in the profoundest sense, pernicious natures," a discovery perfectly consistent with at least one dominant trend in his work; but it is difficult to resist the reflection that this, after all, is what every bourgeois has always practised, whatever he may have professed, and by no means always with the guilty conscience which Nietzsche posits because it had been his own.

Nietzsche's self-contradictions cannot be resolved, or can be resolved in so many different ways that one is left only with his bare experience and the pure energy generated by a divided mind. Mr. F. A. Lea was not the first to find confirmation in the works of this modern Anti-Christ of his own Christian faith, pointing out that, for all his learning, Nietzsche remained astonishingly ignorant of Christian theology, and that Nietzsche's "positive significance lies in being the first European to re-discover the standpoint of Jesus and Paul."[13] Nietzsche's onslaught was directed less against Christ than against his own Christianity, and hence more against Naumburg protestantism than against the whole Christian tradition. Lea's view of Nietzsche's function is certainly valid; but it is only one of a scarcely limitable number of valid views.

Nor is it altogether surprising to learn from Podach that after handing Nietzsche over to the Nazis, his sister—Bernhard Förster's widow—proceeded to address "anti-anti-Semitic" appeals to her new masters. Naumburg, too, was a complex phenomenon; and Nietzsche's sister was half in revolt against its conformism. In coming out on the side of the oppressed, she showed once more that she lacked neither her brother's generous courage nor his perversity.

The wheel had come full circle, because dependence and revolt can never break the circle that confines them. Nietzsche suffered "hell"

[12] *E.g.*, in *The Will to Power*: "There is a slavish love that subjects itself and throws itself away: that idealises, and deludes itself—there is a god-like love that despises and loves and transforms, raises up the beloved."

[13] The same comparison with St. Paul was made by Ernst Bertram in his *Nietzsche* of 1918; and a recent writer, Gerd-Günther Grau, has confirmed Mr. Lea's Christian view of Nietzsche in his study *Christlicher Glaube und intellektuelle Redlichkeit. Eine religionsphilosophische Studie über Nietzsche.* (Frankfurt, 1958.)

Nietzsche's return to Christian precepts after his mental breakdown is well known, and can be partly accounted for by his mother's influence; but the very title *Ecce Homo*, and the signature *Crucifixus* in several of his last communiqués, once again points to the ambivalence of all his concerns. A jotting of his Anti-Christ period confirms it: "Christ on the Cross remains the most sublime of all symbols—even now."

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within that circle, and recorded its upward and downward motions with a faithfulness, candour, and lucidity that will always remain admirable and instructive. No wonder that his ultimate "epiphany" was of the eternal recurrence, of the great cosmic wheel for ever turning and bringing round again what has passed; or that this very conception was an instance of the eternal recurrence in that it reverted across the millennia to the intuitions of Heraclitus and the poet-philosophers before Socrates—that very Socrates who had been Nietzsche's first antagonist in *The Birth of Tragedy*—so that the Dionysus and Anti-Christ of Nietzsche's last creative phase linked up with the Anti-Socrates of his first.

Nietzsche's moral heroism, too, could only affirm and accept the circle, never break it; his *amor fati* embraced the worst, a worst, it may be, never so clearly confronted by a human mind, but made too much of its ability to bear it, to rejoice in it. His *amor fati* was tainted with *Schadenfreude*.

The Missing Middle Register

IF NIETZSCHE cannot be blamed for the Nietzscheans, because he cannot be tied down, neither can he be wholly excused for failing to break the circle. Love and hate, reverence and revolt, faith and scepticism interlock with endless variations in his works, but never quite succeed in engendering that third liberating theme. If we grant Nietzsche the privileges of a poet-philosopher, including the right to contradict himself and to remain for ever ambiguous, his work must be tested by the standards of poetry for its æsthetic and subliminal effects; and here the combination of analytical thinker and visionary proved even more dubious than on the level of doctrine alone.

Nietzsche's diction, too, shows an obsession with certain primitive relationships, dynamisms, and concepts. Some of these have been brilliantly interpreted by Dr. F. D. Luke,[14] who concentrated on the dynamics of height, metaphors of climbing, flying, leaping, dancing, and the related one of sea-faring. As readers of the present essay may have noticed, a similar study could be made of Nietzsche's animal imagery. His warning that he does not want to be remembered as "a savage beast and moral monster" can be offset by another: "I am a dangerous animal, and don't lend myself well to adulation." Nietzsche's animal imagery is so pervasive and conspicuous that its effect is to suspend all those intellectual and moral reservations which he undoubtedly wanted his readers to observe. His capacity for self-identification with the animal world in general, not only with predatory animals, is amply attested both in his writings and his life. That his nickname for his sister was "the llama" may be relatively insignificant[15]; but one of the few physical expressions of affection he is known to have indulged in, and his very last, was towards two cab horses in Turin. An aphorism like the following from *The Dawn of Day* (No. 333) puts the complex in a nutshell:

> *Humanity*. We do not regard animals as moral beings. But do you imagine that animals regard us as moral beings?—An animal that could talk once said: "Humanity is a prejudice, and at least we animals don't suffer from it."

AS WE HAVE seen, Nietzsche was well aware that a doctrine of deliberate brutalism, a kind of ethical Darwinism, could be extracted from his works, as it was to be by the Nazis. Now Nietzsche, as a highly civilised man and a "Good European" (his own phrase), took it for granted that brutality was undesirable, and devoted his therapeutical talents to the vindication of that part of human nature which civilisation had repressed: "The struggle against the brutal instincts is a different one from that against the morbid instincts; indeed, to induce illness can be a means of mastering brutality. In Christianity, psychological treatment often amounts to turning an animal into a sick animal, and thus into a tame one" (*The Will to Power*). Nietzsche does not deny that brutal instincts should be held in check, though this was not his business. Yet, sub-liminally, the effect of his later works is to glorify the predatory beast at the expense of the innocuous or the tame; and it is his metaphors that produce the effect.

It is regrettable, therefore, that *Zarathustra*, the most "poetic" and figurative of Nietzsche's prose works, should have come to be regarded as his *magnum opus*, often as nothing less than the Nietzsche Bible. F. D. Luke, too, doubts that "his prose is at its best where it approaches the nature of poetry; he is certainly at his worst when writing verse." The prose poetry of *Zarathustra* is an unhappy amalgam of biblical and Romantic elements, and this in turn rarely

[14] In *Nietzsche and the Imagery of Height*: Publications of the English Goethe Society (Vol. XXVIII, 1959).

[15] Podach has published the following note by Nietzsche to his sister, the very last coherent document in his hand to be composed without his mother's help:

> I am glad, my dear beloved Llama—that according to your letter you, my little animal, are well——
>
> with heartfelt greetings—cordialement—your confrère frère
>
> *Naumburg a/Saale* FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
> *1890*

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blends very happily with the stringencies of Nietzsche's analytical prose. Above all, the metaphors are allowed to proliferate in a manner that shows up Nietzsche's most serious defects both as a thinker and as a poet. "Only very occasionally is Nietzsche able to achieve *poetic* language in which the image or vehicle has become virtually autonomous," Luke remarks; at the same time the imagery comes close enough to autonomy to detract from that clarity and incisiveness for which Nietzsche's analytical prose is justly admired.

The emblematic character of Nietzsche's poetic imagery, to which Luke's stricture alludes, is equally marked in his verse; apart from those obsessive and primitive gestures already mentioned, which also included metaphors connected with eating and swallowing, Nietzsche's poetic diction hardly ever conveys any awareness of the particulars of human or non-human nature. Yet the only German imaginative writers of the 19th century whom Nietzsche consistently admired were the poetic realists Stifter and Keller, writers who dwelled with loving precision on those "little things" of life which Nietzsche opposed in *Ecce Homo* to the great abstractions. As Schlechta may have had in mind in citing Nietzsche's *Fable* against him, Nietzsche's diction, too, brings us up against that basic contradiction between what he was and what he wanted to be:

> The Don Juan of knowledge: no philosopher or poet has yet discovered him. He is lacking in love for those things which he comes to know, but his intelligence is tickled and gratified by the pursuit and intrigues of knowledge—right up to the highest and farthest stars of knowledge!—until in the end there is nothing left for him to pursue but absolute hurtfulness of knowledge, like the drunkard who ends up by drinking absinthe and *aqua fortis*. So in the end he craves for hell—this being the last knowledge that can *seduce* him. Perhaps hell too will disappoint him, like all that he has known! In that case he would have to remain motionless to all eternity, nailed to his disappointment and himself transformed into the stone guest, longing for a last supper of knowledge of which he will never again partake!—because the whole world hasn't so much as a bite to offer that hungry man. (*Morgenröte*, 327.)

Because he was lacking in love for particulars, Nietzsche's anti-puritanism never became more than a reflex of his self-hatred and self-dissatisfaction, and found no embodiment in his diction. Like the conventional pedagogues, parsons, and ideologists he despised, Nietzsche could not help holding up an ideal yardstick to individuals; though he remained loyal to a few old friends for friendship's sake, not a single individual of his acquaintance came up to the mark, or could conceivably have done so, since the mark was that of the superman who was Nietzsche's anti-self. As he might have gathered from Pascal, to whom he owed so much, the obverse of that angel is the beast, the obverse of that superman the subman. All his richness, energy, and subtlety cannot make up for the gap in Nietzsche's work, the missing middle register of human experience.

Also Sprach Zarathustra may well come to be regarded not as Nietzsche's masterpiece, but as an aberration and monstrosity, as an instance of that late Romantic inflation which he recognised in Wagner, as in the German Reich, and hated because he felt its power over himself. Yet if Nietzsche's importance should ever be doubted, we have only to turn to his early polemical works, the *Thoughts out of Season*, in which he was no solitary prophet on the mountain tops—inviting disciples only to scorn and reject them as slaves, needing disciples, but ashamed of his need—to be reassured of his central and seminal relevance to all that has been thought and experienced in the last hundred years. This young classical scholar spoke to men as a member of society, at once involved in it and critical of it, much as Matthew Arnold did in the same years, and about much the same questions; that Nietzsche was more than twenty years younger can only increase one's respect for his incomparable insight, prescience, and daring. Even Nietzsche's discovery of the Dionysian principle, and his self-identification with it, goes back to these early years and *The Birth of Tragedy*.

This is not to deny that he added to his fundamental perceptions in later years, clarifying or enriching them in many cases, but only to suggest that it was precisely his power and range of perception that failed to keep up with the growing tension of his inner conflict.

The young professor grappled with a civilisation and a culture; the lonely thinker and poet, increasingly, grappled only with himself, yet could not quite accept the prospect of final isolation. Hence the "Dionysian Imperialism," the bragging and self-dramatisation, the tedious repetitions and over-statements, the self-propelled rhetoric and hyperbole, the strident tone of certain later works and passages. These call for readers truly Nietzschean in their readiness to fight back, to discriminate and deflate; and, more than any other writer of his time, Nietzsche might have served, and can still serve, to create such readers.

That the vulgarians seized on his crudities and excesses for their own much cruder and more excessive ends is a reflection not on Nietzsche, but on them.

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ART

Unpainted Landscapes

By Aldous Huxley

LANDSCAPES, landscapes everywhere, but in most parts of the world not a single landscape painting to look at. India and Further India, Persia and the Near East, Pre-Columbian America and Negro Africa—pictorially speaking, all these cultures have been landscapeless. In Europe, the Greeks and their Roman pupils developed the beginnings of an art of landscape painting; but with the decline and fall of the classical world, it vanished. Time passed, and in Syria, under the Omayyad caliphs, fantastic landscapes in mosaic made a brief and fascinating appearance; but once again the art was permitted to die out. Only in medieval China and, somewhat later, in Japan was landscape painting systematically practised over long periods of time. Four or five hundred years after their first appearance in Chinese art, landscapes began to find their way once more into the works of European painters, first as backgrounds and finally, in Early Modern times, as things worth studying, representing and interpreting for their own sake. To-day, alas, landscapes have gone out of fashion and, instead of fresh woods and pastures new, we are treated to the endless monotonies of Abstract Expressionism.

In this odd story of landscape painting how many enigmas confront us! Why was it that no Indian artists ever thought of studying their natural environment? Why did their Chinese counterparts choose to express the mysteries of existence in terms, not of the Hindu's four-armed deities and their bosomy spouses, but of stylised birds and mythical animals and, later on and almost suddenly, of clouds and mists and lovingly observed mountains, of rivers and waterfalls and wind-warped trees, with perhaps a few specimens of humanity, almost invisibly tiny, on the fringes of Nature's enormous emptiness? And why, finally, did it take so long for the European artists of post-classical times to discover that the natural world is beautiful, intrinsically significant and inexhaustibly paintable?

To these questions plenty of glib sociological and philosophico-religious answers have been given. There is some truth, no doubt, in all such explanations, but not, surely, the whole truth. To some extent at least the spirit bloweth where it listeth. Here and there, now and then, a few rebellious individuals manage to break out of their culture and, having broken out, to re-shape some of its features to suit their own idiosyncrasies. The sociological, philosophical, and religious explanations of such happenings require to be supplemented by explanations in terms of heredity and chance, of Mendel and Monte Carlo—of Grace, if you prefer, and Providence and Predestination. At some unforeseeable moment some odd stroke of genetic good luck gets reinforced by the luck of exceptionally favourable circumstances—with the result that a new cultural tradition is born or an old one significantly altered. Or else, and more often, the many roulette wheels that govern so large a segment of human destiny fail to synchronise in favour of novelty, and the old cultural tradition persists, as in India, with only minor variations, century after century.

Men and women can experience the pangs and the ecstasies of love even though they may never have read a love lyric or a romance. And similarly they can be moved by the beauty, the strangeness, the intrinsic meaningfulness of Nature, even though they may never have seen a Constable or a Sung landscape painting. But just as good love poems and good novels can help the inarticulate Paolos and Francescas of this world to understand what is happening to them, to recognise and discriminate the finer shades of their confused and confusing emotions, so too good landscape paintings can help inarticulate lovers of nature to be more completely aware of what it is they are looking at

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and why they are moved by it. A painting is a device that makes it possible for the spectator to see through the artist's eyes. Through the eyes of a mediocre, insensitive artist the spectator will see only stereotyped images, only the expression of commonplace thoughts and vulgar feelings. Looking through the eyes of a good painter, he will see and be made a partaker of a transfigured world, a world of subtle perceptions and profound insights, of intense and yet delicate and controlled emotions, of mysteries recognised and meanings glimpsed. Consider the diverse revelations of Provence which we owe to Cézanne and Van Gogh, to Renoir and Dufy and Dérain. Consider the Ile de France of Sisley, and that other Ile de France, incredibly rich and subtle, revealed by Monet. Consider the Englands of Constable and Turner, the Venice of Turner and those other Venices of Guardi and Canaletto. Consider the Hollands of Cuyp and Hobbema, of Pieter de Hooch and Vermeer, of Ruysdael and Rembrandt. These painters help us not only to feel ourselves into the landscapes which inspired their pictures; they help us also to understand our own thoughts and feelings, all the complex and fluctuating transactions between our minds and the givenness of things, our minds and the home-made conventions of traditional symbolism, our minds and that nameless reality of which existence and consciousness are the manifestations.

HOW UNFORTUNATE, how much to be commiserated with, are the inhabitants of any part of the world, in which no gifted landscape painter has ever taught his fellow men to see their surroundings, and themselves in contact with those surroundings, through the clairvoyant eyes of a great artist! And what rich opportunities await the gifted artist who chooses to explore these pictorially virgin lands!

Confronted recently by the still unpainted landscapes of South India and Ceylon, I found myself wishing—hopelessly, alas, for I lack the necessary talent—that I might be the first to interpret them in paint. There was that enormous banyan tree, for example, in the compound of the Theosophical Society's headquarters at Adyar. With its evergreen aisles and wooden grottoes, its dangling ropes of fibre, its enormous horizontal branches supported, forty or fifty feet from the parent trunk, by twisted pillars that had grown down from above and taken root, it looked like the three-dimensional creation of a bolder and more inventive Dali. To render its implausible extravagance in a painting would call for a Surrealism raised, so to speak, to a higher power; one would have to be a Salvador cubed, a Magritte to the *n*th. And another kind of Surrealism, more inward, subtle and enigmatic, would be required of anyone aspiring to do justice to the succession of scenes that were unfolded before our eyes as my wife and I

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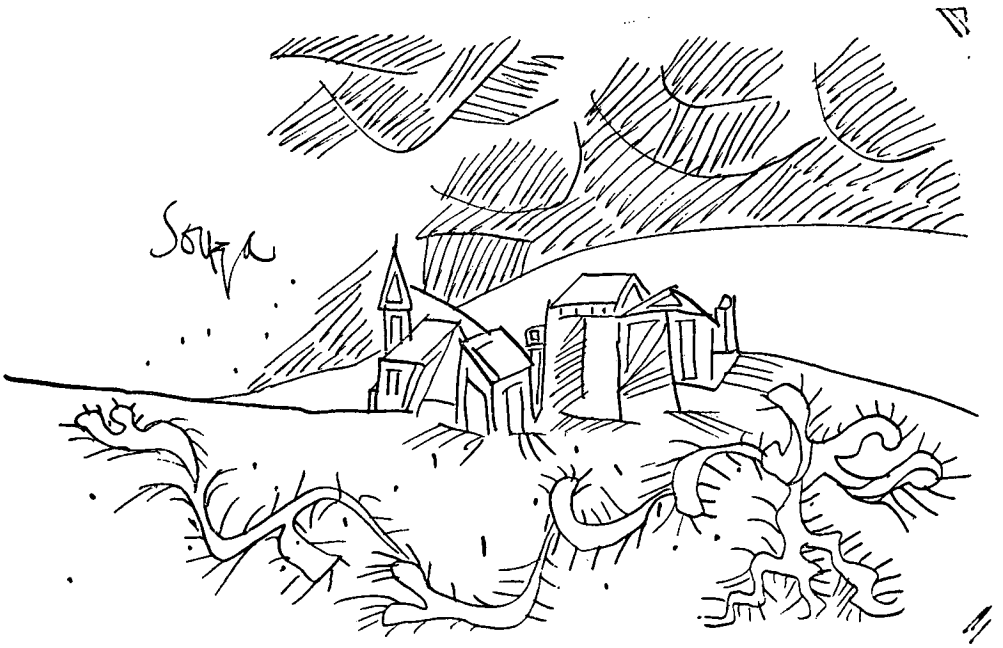
walked through the great Botanical Gardens at Kandy, in Ceylon. Take the Max Ernst who painted that strangely fascinating picture, *La Nymphe Echo,* multiply him by himself, then turn him loose among those fantastic equatorial landscapes and see what he can make of them. We saw them first glowing and glittering in sunlight. Then the clouds of the autumn monsoon rolled in, and under the canopy of evergreen foliage there was an unearthly twilight of jade and dilute black. Up through that submarine dusk rose tall columns of smooth grey bark, mottled with lichen and spreading out, near their base, into the ridges and secret recessions of a grotesque system of wooden buttresses. And these buttresses led down to serpentine roots that kept elbowing up, as they writhed away in all directions, above the surface of the ground. To the Sung landscape painters and their Japanese followers it seemed that man's nature and the paradoxes of his condition could be expressed most forcibly in renderings of mists and precipices, of a solitary boat in a vast sea, of gnarled pine trees or a spray of plum blossom seen apocalyptically in the spring sunshine. What would they have made, I wonder, of the hallucinatory vegetation of the tropics? Portrait of the Unconscious in the costume of a banyan tree. Vision of human destiny as a more than Gothic upthrust of aspiration supported by chaotic lean-tos of congealed ectoplasm and rooted in a network, only half buried, of brutally dislocated boa constrictors.

But such inordinate oddity as we found under the theosophical banyan and in the Singhalese Botanic Garden is exceptional even in the tropics. A painter from the north would find that most landscapes near the equator are alien in a more subtle way, and that their charm consists in the blending of the familiar with the strange, of the already painted with the still unrepresented and pictorially uninterpreted. The plain that surrounds Madras, for example —in its wide and watery flatness it has a look of Holland. But it is Holland with a difference. The yellow-green of rice paddies has replaced the emerald of northern meadows. Instead of Hobbema's poplars, of Ruysdael's massive elms and oaks, tall palm trees glitter in the windy light of noonday, or etch themselves, in an endless repetition of the same black spindly hieroglyph, against the evening sky. In the middle distance the thatched roofs of Tamil villages are hardly distinguishable from the thatched roofs whose forms and textures delighted generations of European landscape painters. But how radically unfamiliar are the human and animal figures in the foreground! Men in white cotton, women in their brightly coloured *saris*, the small emaciated cattle, the black buffaloes between the shafts of two-wheeled carts, the occasional elephant—in the context of these anomalies the hackneyed, every-



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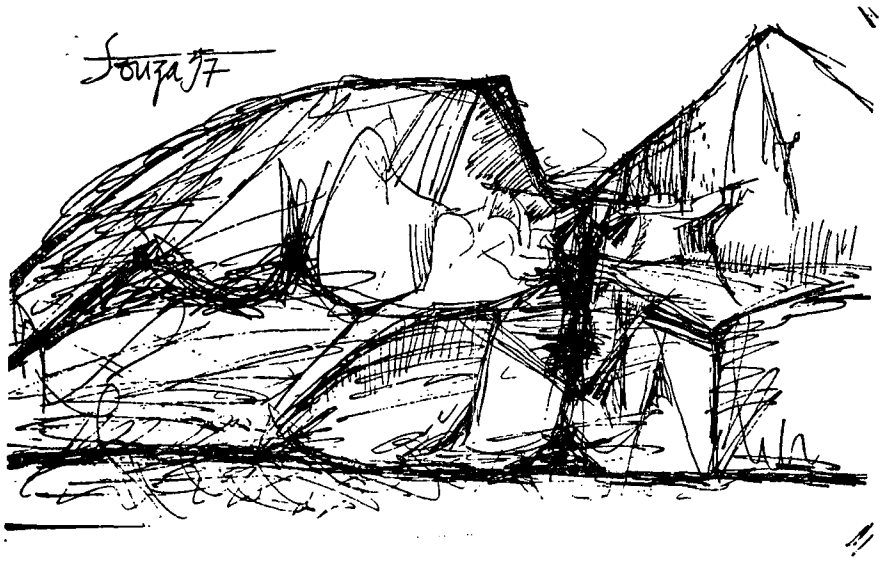
day thatch of Europe takes on another meaning, even a different appearance.

FROM THAT Holland-with-a-difference on the mainland we flew to Ceylon where, surprisingly, another slice of Holland-with-a-difference awaited us. Northward from Colombo, for a distance of some twenty miles, a broad canal runs parallel with the beach. This waterway was created by the Dutch merchants who, ousting the Portuguese, became the rulers of Western Ceylon during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A typical Dutch canal, but a Dutch canal less than ten degrees from the equator. Its placid waters reflect the overhanging foliage of frangipani trees and coconut palms, and between their trunks one catches glimpses of waves breaking on a reef and the



opaquely blue expanses of the Indian Ocean. Uninhibitedly, nature flaunts a picturesqueness that, for the would-be painter of this other Holland, poses the most challenging of problems; for the picturesque is something which it is peculiarly difficult to turn into a good picture. To render picturesqueness in acceptable pictorial terms, one must be a painter with a special kind of gift, an exceptionally strong aesthetic digestion. Artists who lack this strong digestion and special gift, are apt to be betrayed, whenever they try to make pictures out of the picturesque, into sentimentality or bombast. No professional painters, so far as I know, have ever tried to make a rendering of that Dutch canal beside the Indian Ocean, or that Surrealist park in the suburbs of Kandy. If they had, their attempts would in all likelihood have turned out as disastrously as almost all the other attempts, in high latitudes or in low, to translate natural picturesqueness into a picture.

AT SACRAMENTO, in California, there was, and I suppose there still is, a museum whose contents strikingly illustrate this incompatibility (except in the work of a few peculiarly gifted painters) between the sublime in nature and the sublime in art. The old Crocker mansion (for this is what the Sacramento museum used to be) houses a collection which must be seen to be believed. Moving from painting to appalling painting, one finds oneself thanking heaven for Duveen. Duveen made his clients pay through the nose; but he always sold them the genuine article. Millionaires who went in for art-collecting without benefit of Duveen were apt to end up with the sort of objects that fill the Crocker mansion. Conspicuous among these objects are several gigantic canvases of the Rocky Mountains, executed by some nineteenth-century German painter who had come to America and specialised, very profitably it would seem, in Western picturesqueness. Peaks, canyons, waterfalls, pine trees—all the ingredients of a Sung landscape or, at the other end of the world, of an Alpine scene by Turner are here, conscientiously portrayed and arranged in compositions according to the rules laid down by the best teachers in the most Royal of Middle-European Academies. The result in each case is a piece of absurd and completely spurious grandeur, at once theatrical and boring, stone dead and violently rhetorical. For someone who

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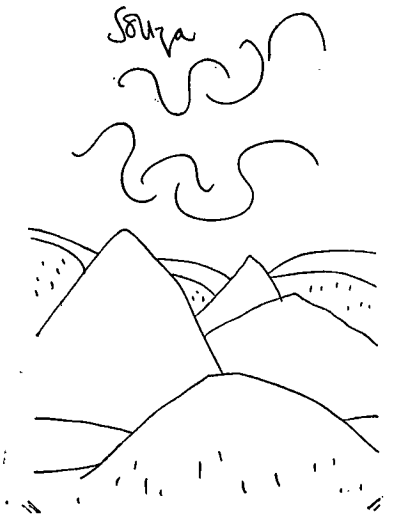
might have coped, if not well, at least inoffensively with two cows under an oak tree at the edge of a meadow, the enormous picturesqueness of Yosemite and the Grand Tetons were the most fatal of temptations. Succumbing to the lure of natural sublimity, bad painters, and even those good painters who lack the special gift required for the transformation of the picturesque into pictures, fall headlong into one or other of the many kinds of ridiculousness.

The Rockies have never been interpreted by a great painter. Nor have the Andes, nor the Himalayas, nor the Caucasus, nor the Atlas. And, for all their accessibility, even the Alps, even the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands have seldom found their way into good pictures. Conscious of the dangers that lurk in a too emphatic subject, most painters have preferred the Home Counties to Ben Nevis, the Grande Jatte to Chamonix or the Lake of Lucerne. And yet what a pity it is that the world has had so few Turners, how unfortunate that the example of the great masters of Chinese and Japanese landscape painting was not followed in other parts of the world! Mountains exist and we have learned to love them. Then why are there so few good mountains in art? Why so few adequate pictorial renderings of one of the most rewarding religious experiences still accessible to the modern mind —the Wordsworthian mysticism of heights and mists and distances, of storm and sunrise, of chasms apocalyptically illumined and lights abruptly quenched by the shadows of passing clouds? We pose these questions in terms of metaphysics and spiritual experience; but the answers we receive are strictly professional. If mountains are so seldom painted, it is because, except for a few unusually gifted artists, they are just too much of a good thing. In the Far East a succession of gifted painters created a tradition of the picturesque, a method for rendering the most extravagant natural facts in terms of an art in which sublimity never turned into *schmaltz* or bombast. In the West the wilder aspects of Nature have been successfully rendered by poets and men of letters, much less successfully and much less frequently by painters. With us, there has never been anything comparable to the Chinese tradition of cloud-and-mountain painting. The wildly romantic background to Leonardo's Virgin and Child at Munich, the craggy wildernesses of Altdorfer, Patinir's vast panoramas of hills and rivers— in our part of the world such things are somewhat eccentric. And because they are eccentric, because European artists had no tradition of cloud-and-mountain painting to tell them what not to do, such renderings of the sublime in



Nature are apt to be marred by what Coleridge called "nimiety," or too-muchness; they tremble very often on the brink of absurdity.

Lovely or terrifying, sinister or majestic, how can the enormities of Nature in its wilder aspects be translated into an equivalently savage and yet ordered and harmonious work of art? That is the question confronting the would-be painter of the picturesque. It is a problem exceedingly difficult of solution. That is why, not Switzerland, but Essex, the Low Countries and the Ile de France have provided most European landscape painters with their raw materials.

THE ROCKIES are not the only feature of the Far Western scene to remain outside the pale of good painting. There is also the desert. And the desert, of course, is not only Far Western, it is also North African, Middle Eastern and Central Asian. For more than a century—ever since the French became interested in Algeria and the Americans took to their covered waggons—the strange landscapes of the desert have challenged painters to display their skill. Alas, no painter of the first rank has ever accepted the challenge. In 1832, it is true, a great artist visited Morocco and was profoundly impressed by what he saw. Delacroix, as the vivid descriptions in his Journal attest, was exquisitely sensitive to landscape; but by temperament, training and ambition he was no landscape painter. For him, the proper study of mankind was man—man in action, man, preferably, in brightly coloured clothes. ("Beauty," he wrote of the Moroccans, "has a share in everything they make. As for us, in our corsets, our tight shoes, our ridiculous pinching

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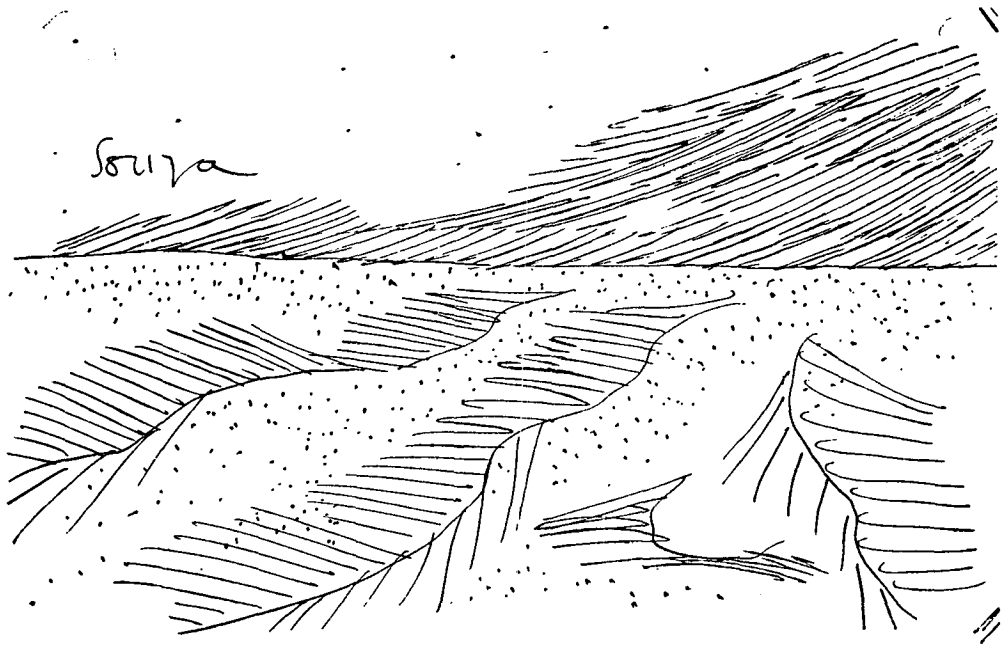
clothes, we are pitiful. The graces exact vengeance for our science.") The paintings inspired by his African visit were of Arab horses and their riders, of lion hunts and odalisques, of Moorish soldiers, Algerine ladies, Jews at a wedding. The picturesqueness of nature was rendered, somewhat perfunctorily, only in water-colour sketches.

The most popular desert landscape of the nineteenth century was that which forms the background and is half the subject matter of Holman Hunt's "The Scapegoat." Painted with a more than Flemish realism that spares us not a single hair, the sin-charged goat is shown in the last stages of dehydration and collapse. (Five or six of his models had to die of heat stroke before the remorselessly conscientious artist was satisfied.) Around the expiring goat stretch the desert plains that border the northern end of the Dead Sea, and in the distance rise the jagged hills of Moab, glowing in the rays of the setting sun with the purest aniline magenta. To the untravelled eye those magenta mountains may seem unbelievable; but, alas, they are perfectly true. I have seen them in Palestine, seen them again in California and Utah. In the desert, magenta mountains are observable realities. Nature is rarely monstrous; but when the Almighty does go in for bad taste, the results are truly stupendous. Deserts are the scene of some of His most outrageous performances. The more flashy of these performances, such as magenta mountains, vermilion crags, precipices stratified into the likeness of gigantic Neapolitan ices, are precisely the things that bad painters are most attracted by. Compounding Nature's lapses with their own, they translate her worst mistakes into pictures yet more deplorable. But cosmic bad taste is the exception even in deserts. The dry places of the earth can also be picturesque with a kind of delicate and subtle sublimity.

There is the sublimity, first of all, of sheer space. What a pity that Seurat never had a chance of working in the desert! More effectively than any other painter, he knew how to render on canvas the given fact and the intrinsic meaning of emptiness. In the desert he would have found opportunities for artistic space exploration even more inviting than those which inspired his extraordinary seascapes.



Emptiness is the natural phenomenon most difficult to translate into the language of painting. Only a little less refractory are the objects within the desert's emptiness. I have looked down from the north rim of the Grand Canyon and seen in the abyss, hundreds of feet below, a thunderstorm in full blast. It was a subject for half-a-dozen Turners rolled into one. Even the less spectacular aspects of the desert scene are too odd and emphatic for artistic comfort. The wind-carved crags and mesas; the isolated buttes like sleeping elephants, and the same buttes in winter, white with snow against an inky sky; the plains under their sparse mosaic of grey

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and russet and bleached gold, of sagebrush, buckwheat, withered grass; the queer, uncanny vegetable shapes in the foreground—ferocious cactuses and ocatillos, gesticulating Joshua trees, the black skeletons of long-dead junipers, the bayonet-leaved yuccas exploding, in defiance of the perennial drought, into tall pagodas of ivory blossom. . . . Baroque extravagance at the heart of emptiness, infinity embracing the picturesque —to the adventurous artist the desert offers the most challenging opportunities.

EVERY VISIT to one of the earth's dry places revives in me a passionate desire to start painting again. Then I remind myself that good intentions are a measure of excellence only in matters of conduct, never in art. In art the only things that count are talent and the aesthetically satisfying products of talent. And then I sadly remember the great gulf fixed between what, as a Sunday painter, I intended to do and what I actually achieved. I remember, too, my visit some years ago to an exhibition of several hundreds of the unspeakably vulgar paintings, into which well-meaning artists with insufficient talent had translated the facts of desert botany, geology, and climate. There is plenty of ugliness and ineptitude in the world. Why go out of one's way to add to it? Wisely, I am sure, but sadly, I resist the temptation to rush out and buy a box of colours and a portable easel.

Meanwhile the desert and all the other unpainted regions of the earth still await the advent of those who will translate their landscapes into the kind of revealing and enlightening art that makes us more aware—more aware of who we are and of the nature of the worlds in which, as multiple amphibians, we are predestined to live; more aware of those given facts whose ultimate meaning is simply their own existence; more aware of the enigma to which as we progressively discover, the only answer is a deepening of the essential mystery.

Toad

Squat in the stagnant sunlight
On the moss beneath a shrub
Its tongue slowly flicking
Its throat slowly throbbing
Huddled alone in the wood.
A mighty ten-year-old hunter
Found it damply sparkling there
And caught it up in his hands.
He felt the frightened
Water on his fingers.
Into his pocket carefully
So he could carry it home
And down on the floor he played
Making it hop for his joy.
But the room was dry
The skin dried up
Dust on its back
And it died.
Weeping, he knelt on the floor
Holding this love in his fingers
Waiting for dinnertime.
Before he went to bed
He put it in a box
And hid it in his closet
Behind a baseball glove.

Henry S. Taylor

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THEATRE

Shocks That Flesh is Heir To

By Nigel Dennis

THE STATE of being shocked is as useless as that of being stunned and resembles it so closely that a man writing to a paper can never be quite sure whether to start: "Sir, I have been shocked to learn . . ." or "Sir, I am stunned to hear. . . ." Whichever alternative he chooses, he means to say as stoutly as possible that apart from a feeble capacity to clasp a pen he has been robbed by outrage of all mental and muscular usefulness. Yet, of the two hapless states, that of being stunned is by far the better because it is nothing to be ashamed of; whereas being shocked comes as a hard blow to the vanity—indeed, that is what makes the state of being shocked the shocking state it is, as we can tell from the humiliated mumbling that follows being shocked. The reason for this humiliation is that when we have devoted all our adult years to behaving like men of the world and seeming impervious to horrid things, it is not nice to find ourselves suddenly behaving like ordinary people and experiencing feelings of warmth and injury. Each one of us hopes, of course, that this hour of sudden nakedness, announcing abrupt change into a bumpkin, will never strike for him; but the truth is that there is no escaping it; we are all bound to be shocked sooner or later: it can happen to us even in an old-time backwater like the contemporary theatre. That this is so, can be declared dogmatically, for we, our very self, can recall being shocked by *The Affair*, and this was particularly humiliating because the whole nature of this play made it impossible for us to fall back on the excuse that we had only been stunned. Ever since that day of internal injury we have tried to avoid going to any first night that might do it again, and we have tried particularly to avoid any potential shocker whose author was thought well of by the best people. For if it is humiliating to be shocked by C. P. Snow, it must be a sort of agony to be shocked by a distinguished author.

In trying to escape from being shocked we have kept a canny eye on anything suggestive of light comedy. So-called "serious" plays and tragedies are hardly ever likely to come as a shock because they are so dependent on gravity; but light comedy is always dangerous because it may at any moment say something flippant about something one takes seriously, and, before one can summon up a timely sneer or affected cough, leave one irreparably shocked. *The Taming of the Shrew*, which has been distressing everyone for some centuries now, is a good example of a shocker of the first water, and only in the last year or so has a producer found a way of freeing it from its intention and making it a credit to the author.

CHIEF AMONG THE PLAYS we have tried to avoid are those by Mr. John Osborne and Mr. Tennessee Williams; for the former is flippant about the monarchy and the latter about marriage, and these are both subjects about which we can trust ourselves to make jokes but may well be shocked when others try. We felt this particularly in Mr. Osborne's case, because having seen Albert Finney with the gripes in *Luther* we were alarmed to think of the shock we might suffer on seeing such unbridled turbulence laughingly at work in the body of the constitutional monarchy.

All we saw, in fact, was Mr. Osborne's teeth being kept at bay by the goodness of his heart. *The Blood of the Bambergs* is one of those plays in which the author sets his stage upon a shocking principle and then proceeds upon a kindly one, so that there is a wide gap between his dentures, which are always set for a bite but only present a smile. At the beginning, a man comes on with a microphone to describe the preparations for a royal wedding: here is the apparatus required for a monologue that is either shockingly satirical or overwhelmingly funny. But as the minutes pass, and the monologue follows a sort of middle line between these possibilities, arousing neither rage nor laughter, one begins to think that Mr. Osborne

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underrated his own affection for the fairy-tale he intended to mock. By following his feelings instead of defying them, he behaved very honourably; but his honesty was no help to his play, because one cannot decapitate with kindness what one has set out to execute in malice. Mr. Osborne's weakness—in the sense of something that prevents him seeing his own work for what it is—has always been a respectful affection for what is elderly, out-of-date, conservative, and unimaginative, by which we mean Mrs. Porter's father, the "entertainer's" father, Luther's father, and Luther's spiritual father. So it is no surprise, really, to find that the antiquated, fairy-tale world of a Royal Household became pleasing to him in the end, and that once engaged on it he married it instead of biting it.

This was a very good thing, in view of the second play of the evening, *Under Plain Cover*. For this, too, is a study of childishness: it is about two people who make their marriage a happy one by living in a world of make-believe. This they do by dressing-up and wearing singular clothes, thus pretending to personalities and powers which are purely illusory. But this, amusingly enough, is also the function of a modern royal family, so if we put Mr. Osborne's two plays side by side we get a sort of double portrait of self-delusion and fetishism, the rulers playing it expensively and their subjects cheaply, and each party in danger of being exposed to contempt by an intrusive cameraman. This is why it was a good thing that Mr. Osborne dealt amiably with the Bambergs, for it would have been very unjust, and even shocking, to start an evening by satirising a royal wedding as childish and absurd and end it by giving one's whole heart to an adolescent passion for robes and underwear. Indeed, it might be very interesting to see the two plays knocked into one, with one press-photographer doing the work of the present two: the blend might be very impressive and nobody would be shocked to see royalty swapping illusions with the common people.

WE HAVE SAID earlier that Mr. Tennessee Williams' lighthearted views on marriage appeared to be a possible threat in the shocking sense, but this was not quite true. Deep inside, we could not imagine being shocked by this rent and kindly Orpheus. The more southerly part of the United States, about which he always writes, lost all power to shock anybody many years ago: we have always thought of the region as a sort of natural cross between a national park and a game reserve—that is to say, a very distinct area of which the nation may be justly proud, on the one hand, but also, on the other, one in which one must keep the car windows up when the inhabitants come out to drink. In this perfectly natural setting where the undulating slut moans for her mate and the moon beams equally upon the rapist and the impotent—here is no place to feel shocked or even nonplussed. And yet, one obvious problem presents itself: is it possible, one asks, to extract *comedy* from such a region? That the men, and perhaps even the women, of the South should have an occasional moment of lightheartedness we would not deny; but it could only linger for a few seconds, like a momentary betrayal of the natural perversions.

Mr. Williams is too good a man to realise this. For years, he has lived and worked among these elemental natives, and by now their drinking of Bourbon from coconut shells and their proud struggle to achieve the sexual act have come to seem no more than the workaday offices of a very dear old world. And as he sees, of course, as every author must, that scenes and events which lead to solemnity and tragedy can also lead to hilarity and comedy, he has resolved for once to sit back and invoke the spirit of the place with a cheerful voice. Much as a royal Bamberg might look down from his throne and spare a smile for the little fetishists deep in their knickers below, so Mr. Williams looks down benevolently upon his animal kingdom and prepares to play umpire at their sports.

How unexpected is Southern mirth! Hardly is the curtain, or jungle-fringe, up, when in runs a panting bride, fresh from her first night. Her husband, she explains, jumped on her like a tiger and tried to rape her: she was quite taken aback. Is marriage like this? she asks, because she was not brought up to think it was. This is the first joke of the evening, because we see at once that the bride is a comical little fool, clinging to illusions that a mature Southern girl is deprived off at the age of twelve.

Soon, the husband comes running in. Of course he tried to rape his wife, he says with some annoyance, as if irked at being asked to deny a straightforward and natural movement. The awful thing was, he explains, that he was unable to do it. And yet, he had always found whores a push-over. How will he ever forgive his wife for making him impotent?

The man who listens to these confessions is one of those kindly, mature Southerners who do so much to bring civilisation to the region. He explains gently to the bride and bridegroom that rape, frigidity, and impotence are only to be expected on Southern first nights, and he urges the couple not to feel discouraged. He himself, he admits, was unable to make love to his wife for a full two months after they were married, because she was extremely ugly and he had only married her in the hope that her father would die and leave him a lot of money. And

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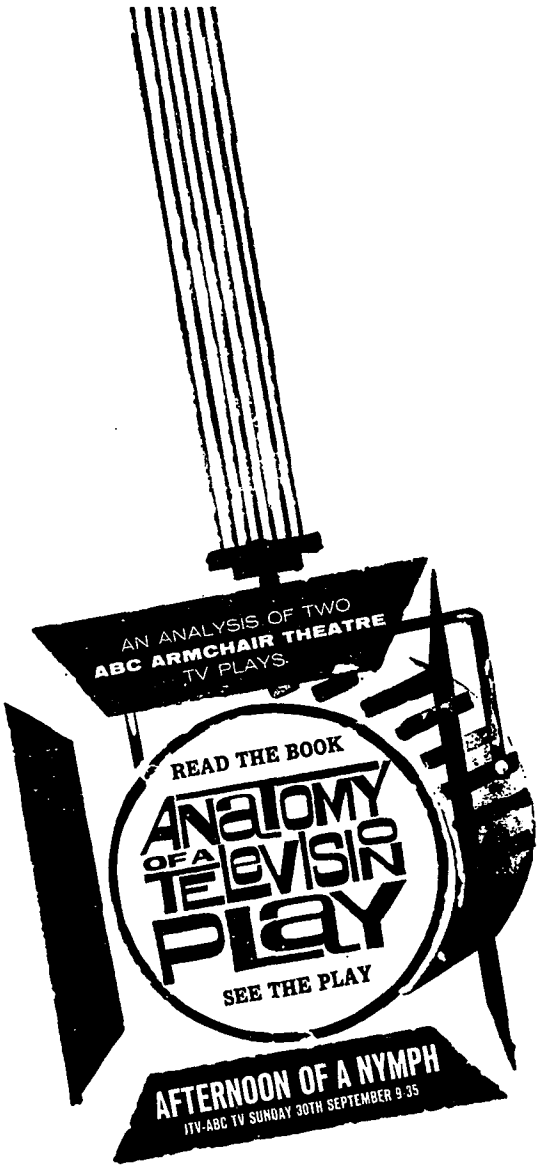

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yet, they have managed to rub along somehow, particularly since he persuaded her to have her "buck" teeth extracted.

LONG BEFORE Mr. Williams, chuckling away in his rocker with a corncob in his gob, had brought his play to a happy end, we had discovered both why we were shocked by his play and how being shocked happens. We will now share this important discovery with the public, so that they may take steps only to be stunned in future.

The first essential in shocking people is to have no intention whatever of doing so. The author must hold up a pair of spotlessly clean hands and display, from the very beginning of his work, the conviction that his material, and the things he says about it, have occurred to him in laughable innocence. Moreover, all this must be true. Shocking effects can never be feigned. When they are, we spot them immediately, and dismiss them as blots of education. If the moral void is to be shocking, it must never be pretended.

To sustain his moral void, the shocking author must have a strong sense of right and wrong but must be able to apply it only to the machinery of things, as if tuning a dicky carburettor. He must understand that rape, impotence, frigidity, the longevity of old people, buck teeth, and other misfortunes, are handicaps to a full enjoyment of life and should be corrected; but his innocence must always show through his appearance of maturity, even if he has seven veils with which to cover it: he should not know, for example, that he is dealing with an abnormal situation or that his married couples are really in the early stages of toilet training. Shocking comedy becomes impossible once the hard facts drift through to the author.

The shocking author's innocence, finally, must have a long tradition of open childishness behind it. He must be able to look back on a long line of wanton boys who have mistaken their regional infancy for a universal verity, and, strong in this misapprehension, have given the world many highly-talented and seemingly-mature examples of juvenile delinquency. The American South is one of the few regions of the world in which this tradition is still a living thing. When given earnest expression by a dramatist who believes in it, the result may be passionate and even impressive, as Mr. Williams has often shown. But if this childish tradition is to shock, it must be translated into comedy. Such melancholy ingredients as rape and protruding teeth must be its toys, and our shock must be the infant's joy.

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The Abyss *by Theodore Roethke*

I

Is the stair here?
Where's the stair?
"The stair's right there,
But it goes nowhere."

And the abyss? the abyss?
"The abyss you can't miss:
It's right where you are—
A step down the stair."

Each time ever
There always is
Noon of failure,
Part of a house.

In the middle of,
Around a cloud,
On top a thistle
The wind's slowing.

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II

I have been spoken to variously
But heard little.
My inward witness is dismayed
By my unguarded mouth.
I have taken, too often, the dangerous path,
The vague, the arid,
Neither in nor out of this life.

Among us, who is holy?
What speech abides?
I hear the noise of the wall.
They have declared themselves,
Those who despise the dove.

Be with me, Whitman, maker of catalogues:
For the world invades me again,
And once more the tongues begin babbling.
And the terrible hunger for objects quails me:
The sill trembles.
And there on the blind
A furred caterpillar crawls down a string.
My symbol!
For I have moved closer to death, lived with death;
Like a nurse he sat with me for weeks, a sly surly attendant,
Watching my hands, wary.
Who sent him away?
I'm no longer a bird dipping a beak into rippling water
But a mole winding through earth,
A night-fishing otter.

III

Too much reality can be a dazzle, a surfeit;
Too close immediacy an exhaustion:
As when the door swings open in a florist's storeroom—
The rush of smells strikes like a cold fire, the throat freezes,
And we turn back to the heat of August,
Chastened.

So the abyss—
The slippery cold heights,
After the blinding misery,
The climbing, the endless turning,
Strike like a fire,
A terrible violence of creation,
A flash into the burning heart of the abominable;
Yet if we wait, unafraid, beyond the fearful instant,
The burning lake turns into a forest pool,
The fire subsides into rings of water,
A sunlit silence.

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IV

How can I dream except beyond this life?
Can I outleap the sea—
The edge of all the land, the final sea?
I envy the tendrils, their eyeless seeking,
The child's hand reaching into the coiled smilax,
And I obey the wind at my back
Bringing me home from the twilight fishing.

In this, my half-rest,
Knowing slows for a moment,
And not-knowing enters, silent,
Bearing being itself,
And the fire dances
To the stream's
Flowing.

Do we move toward God, or merely another condition?
By the salt waves I hear a river's undersong,
In a place of mottled clouds, a thin mist morning and evening.
I rock between dark and dark,
My soul nearly my own,
My dead selves singing.
And I embrace this calm—
Such quiet under the small leaves!—
Near the stem, whiter at root,
A luminous stillness.

The shade speaks slowly:
'Adore and draw near.
Who knows this—
Knows all.'

V

I thirst by day. I watch by night.
I receive! I have been received!
I hear the flowers drinking in their light,
I have taken counsel of the crab and the sea-urchin,
I recall the falling of small waters,
The stream slipping beneath the mossy logs,
Winding down to the stretch of irregular sand,
The great logs piled like matchsticks.

I am most immoderately married:
The Lord God has taken my heaviness away;
I have merged, like the bird, with the bright air,
And my thought flies to the place by the bo-tree.

Being, not doing, is my first joy.

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Five Poems by Donald Hall

The Valley

The hills bend water
into the river
on which the villages

hang like clothespins.
The valley huddles
the grain of the sun,

and the sun's animals
graze in the valley.
The fat barges

low for the hillsides
as they steer downstream
to the coast and the city.

This is the valley
which encloses the sun
in its warm body,

and I keep the valley
in my own body
from the beaks of the wind.

The Husbands

This one
  is a sail
  and catches
  the fist of
the wind.

This one
  is an elm
  which makes shade
  on a lawn
and roosts

birds. This
  one is a
  piano
  factory.
This one

is a
  Greek temple
  of clapboard.
  This one is
gold bells.

The Bird

Its eye on the
side of its head
flicks like a snake's
tongue. Now it runs
by hopping through
the blades of stiff
grass. Suddenly
I feel shadow
move over me.
I see a bat
with the body
of a black horse.
I run
under the rock.

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The Wives

If I said, "Little wives,
shut in your dark
houses, an enormous
tiger lily splits
the roof of each house

in the night, and arranges
the moon to itself
and only withdraws
just at dawn,"
you would smile,

and think about bright
flowers, and forget
the money and the shopping,
but if I went on, "I only
see your lilies grow

in my happy sleep,
because you have made no gardens
in your blocks of houses
for flowers that come
in the dark night,"

you would suddenly
cry, or pick up a book,
or walk by yourself
for a long time
on the white sidewalks.

The City

Office buildings bark like dogs. They are chasing
a fox they have smelled but not seen.
On the corners, the flowers of the street lamps
burn in a casing of leaves. The revolving doors
of the huge shops spin like whirlpools,
and the floors are the bottom of the sea.
The shoulders of the ships in the harbour
hover above the bars and the warehouses.
In the bars, the mirrors gossip like foxes.

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Two Dream Songs by John Berryman

1. Columbus Day

"Scads of good eats," dere own t'ree cars, the 'teens
(until of them shall be asked one thing, they romp or doze)
have got it made;
no prob. was ever set them, their poor ol' jerks
of parents *loved* them, with deep-freeze, & snacks
would keep a Hindu family-group alive.

Well, so they're liars & gluttons & cowards: so what?
. . . It's the Land of Plenty, maybe about to sigh.
Why shouldn't they terrify
with hegemony Dad (stupido Dad) and "teach"?
(The tanks of the elders roll, in exercise, on the German plain.)
Even if their sense is to (swill &) die

why don't they join us, pal, as Texas did
(the oil-mailed arrogant butt), and learn how to speak
modestly, & with exactness, and
. . . like a sense of the country, man? Come off it. Powers,
the feted traitor, became so in hours,
and the President, ignorant, didn't even lie.

2.

The weather was fine. They took away his teeth,
white & helpful; bothered his backhand;
halved his green hair.
They blew out his loves & interests. "Underneath,"
(they called in iron voices) "understand,
is nothing. So there."

The weather was very fine. They lifted off
his covers till he showed, and cringed & pled
to see himself less.
They installed mirrors till he flowed. "Enough"
(murmured they) "if you will watch us instead,
yet you may saved be. Yes."

The weather fleured. They weakened all his eyes,
and burned odd thumbs into his ears, and shook
his hand like a notch.
They flung long silent speeches. (Off the hook!)
They sandpapered his plumpest hope. (So capsize.)
They took away his crotch.

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

Can Labour Recover?

IN THE THREE YEARS since the last general election, the leaders of the Labour Party have been forced to concentrate on the tactical problems of maintaining their power inside the Labour movement. Between now and the next election, they must concentrate instead on the strategic problems of winning power in the country at large. If the election were held to-morrow, this would be an easy task. Labour would win without difficulty, almost without exertion. The ineptitude of the Government's economic policy during the last year, and its total failure to convince the electorate that its policy was based on any coherent principle, have made the Conservative Party's immediate electoral prospects look worse than they have looked for years. At the same time, the Liberal revival has benefited the Labour Party almost as much as it has benefited the Liberals themselves. If the pattern of this year's by-elections were repeated at a general election, Mr. Crossman's dream would come true and the Liberals would put Mr. Gaitskell in Downing Street.

But this is a flimsy basis for confidence. Unhappily for the Labour Party, it is highly unlikely that the next election will be held to-morrow; and when it is held, there is no guarantee that the pattern of the by-elections will be repeated. Selwyn Lloyd was not thrown to the wolves solely in order to gratify some whim of the Prime Minister's. On the contrary, it is clear that the Cabinet changes were designed as the opening shots in the Government's campaign to present itself, at the next election, as the party of growth and prosperity. Since the Government still has plenty of time to produce the familiar pre-election boom, there can be no certainty that this manœuvre will fail. If it succeeds as triumphantly as it did in 1959, the outlook for Labour is bleak. Another defeat on the scale of the last two would be the signal for another orgy of political cannibalism, of the kind which came near to destroying the party after 1959. Both wings of the party would see in a new defeat fresh confirmation of the lessons which they drew from the last one. The Left would clamour, with redoubled vigour, for a "bold Socialist policy" and would point, with justice, to the disastrous consequences of Right-wing timidity. The Right would be more than ever convinced of the need to "adjust to the affluent society," and would point, with equal justice, to the disastrous results of placating the Left. Meanwhile, trade unionists might begin to ask themselves, rather more loudly than some of them have done already, what exactly they have to gain from continuing to support a political party which seems incapable of performing the most important part of its job.

In the long run, however, the greatest danger of all is presented by the Liberal Party. For the time being the Liberals are still a joke rather than a threat. But if Labour fails to improve its position substantially at the next election, and the Liberals do anything like as well as they have been doing in the by-elections this year, the joke may rapidly cease to be funny. It is true that even the most optimistic Liberals have no real hope of making serious inroads on the Labour vote at the next election, except perhaps in a handful of safe Conservative seats. But if the Conservatives should win for the fourth time in succession, and if the Liberals continue to improve their position in the sort of way they have been doing in the last two years, who can tell what may happen to the Labour vote at the election *after* next? And once questions like this begin to be asked, who can tell what may happen to the morale of an already demoralised Labour Party?

Mr. Grimond has made no secret of his ambition to engineer what he calls a "realignment of the Left." So long as the Labour Party is generally believed to have a reasonable chance of winning the next election on its own, such a realignment is clearly out of the question. But if it does no better in the next election than it did in the last two, its chances of winning any future election may seem somewhat remote. To serious politicians in the Labour Party, men who are in politics to do something and whose fingers have been itching to grasp the levers of power for ten wasted years, this may seem an intolerable prospect. If the alternative is continued political sterility and a permanent Conservative Government, one or two of them might even decide that Mr. Grimond's realignment is a lesser evil.

I DO NOT WANT to exaggerate this danger. For anyone who calls himself a Socialist, a realignment of the kind proposed by Mr. Grimond is an appalling prospect. On the crucial issues of equality and economic power, the official Liberal Party has given no sign that it is more Left-wing than the Conservatives are. No Socialist could

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conceivably want a merger with the Liberals, and I doubt very much if more than a handful of Socialists would join one. But in the kind of situation which would be likely to follow another Conservative triumph at a general election, the voters themselves might bring about a realignment of the Left whether the Labour Party wanted it or not. In Labour's fortress seats—the seats which have been, in practice, controlled by the trade unions since before the Labour Party came into existence—the traditional Labour vote would stay loyal to the traditional Labour Party. Elsewhere, even working-class Labour voters might desert to the Liberals if they thought that the Liberals had a better chance of beating the Conservatives. After 1918, the Labour Party gained a sudden increase in strength because Liberal voters realised that it was now the chief rival to the Conservatives. This could happen in reverse. Between 1918 and 1924 the same process happened in reverse. The Labour vote more than doubled; and hundreds of thousands of its new voters must have been former Liberals who came to the conclusion that the Labour Party now offered a better hope of beating the Conservatives.

Can this chapter of catastrophes be averted? If so, how? The answer, I think, is that it can. During the 'fifties, the Conservatives won elections largely on the memory of "Socialist austerity," much as in 1945 the Labour Party won on the memory of unemployment and Munich. Now the memory of "austerity" is fading, just as the memory of the 'thirties faded in the closing years of the Attlee Government. A new generation has come on to the registers, for whom Cripps, "groundnuts," and even Ogre Bevan are as remote as the Means Test. The British people are at last beginning to take their present modest level of prosperity for granted, and are no longer disposed to vote automatically for the party that presided over its coming, in dumb gratitude. The Liberal revival has shown that in the younger generation, in particular, there is a pervasive, inarticulate sense that all is not well with Tory Britain. At one level there is an accumulation of personal grievances, all having a common origin in one aspect or another of Government policy: the chaos on the roads, soaring rents in the centre of London, the cost of mortgages. At a deeper level there is a more confused—but conceivably more deeply felt—sense that the Government has no conception of what Britain's place in the world should be, or of the shape it wants British society to take.

These grievances exist, and they have generated a more radical mood in the country. The tragedy is that the Labour Party has been unable to give a voice to the confused medley of aspirations and dissatisfactions which can be detected in the minds of the people, or even to appeal to them with overwhelming force. If this is to be done, it must be done quickly.

If the psephologists have established any proposition beyond reasonable doubt, it is that the few short weeks of a formal election campaign have comparatively little effect on the result. The voters have made up their minds long before the campaign begins; all that the campaign does is to confirm them in the decisions they have already taken. It follows that, if a party's propaganda is to have any effect at all on public opinion, its real campaign must be started long before the formal campaign has opened. This, of course, is what the Conservatives did before 1959, with results which everyone knows. It is now 1962. The next election must take place, at the latest, by October 1964; and if past experience is a realistic guide, it will probably take place before then. Where, then, is the Labour Party's sustained and energetic propaganda campaign, launched now in order to forestall a repetition of 1959?

THE SAME LACK OF VIGOUR can be seen in the Labour Party's performance in the House of Commons. It is arguable, I think, that most politicians and political commentators pay too much attention to speeches made in the House of Commons and to the empty paraphernalia of a parliamentary "occasion." But although what happens in the House of Commons has little direct importance, it has a great deal of secondary importance. In a strange, unexplained way, the morale of the two parliamentary parties seeps down to the rank and file outside; and even the electorate—which probably pays no attention at all to the straightforward parliamentary reports in its newspapers—eventually takes its cue from the same source. To put it at its lowest, the House of Commons is still an ideal forum for propaganda.

This forum has been sadly underused by the Parliamentary Labour Party. My own earliest political memories are of watching the Tory benches from the gallery of the House of Commons, during the last years of the Labour Government. There they sat, those well-groomed Achitophels, "resolved to ruin or to rule the State"; unshakeably convinced of their own divine right to power; implacably determined to use every means, fair or foul, to return to it at the earliest possible opportunity. Their political attitudes were detestable, but as political tacticians they were magnificent. Everything the Labour Government did, good, bad, or indifferent, was subjected to a torrent of abuse; every misfortune the country suffered was trumpeted gleefully abroad; every triumph

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it won was denigrated or glossed over. And it worked. Mr. John Freeman's description of what it felt like to speak in the House of Commons in those years is well-known, but I cannot resist quoting it again: "I have not forgotten the tension of rising to answer questions or conduct a debate under the cold, implacable eyes of that row of well-tailored tycoons, who hated the Labour Government with a passion and fear which made them dedicated men in their determination to get it out of office and to limit the damage it could do to the world which they saw as theirs by right." Mr. Freeman is a fairly tough customer himself. If he felt like that, what must others have felt? The answer is that some, at least, felt a great deal worse. By their performance in Opposition, the Conservatives nibbled away at the Government's self-confidence and lowered the morale of its followers. More important, they even managed to dictate the terms within which the political battle was fought. Can anyone seriously believe that the Labour Opposition has had a similar effect? Will Tory Freemans one day confess to the tension inspired in them by the cold, implacable eyes of the Labour front bench?

Only part of the responsibility for Labour's lassitude in Opposition rests with the divisions in the party. One of the many fallacies in the conventional wisdom of political commentators is to imagine that divided parties cannot win power or harass Governments. In fact there were deep divisions in the Labour Party even in 1945. Few political parties have ever been more deeply divided than the Liberal Party was in the years before its great victory in 1906. The American Democratic party was deeply divided throughout the 'thirties and 'forties; and it was divided even more profoundly when President Kennedy was elected in 1960. It is not the fact of Labour's divisions which are to blame for its poor performance in Opposition, but an underlying malaise of which its divisions are merely a symptom.

THIS MALAISE AFFLICTS both wings of the party in the House of Commons, both the "Old Left" with its determination to go on fighting the battles of fifty years ago, and the "Old Right" with its unwillingness to fight any battles at all. These groups detest each other, of course; and, indeed, the public has been bored to death by the venom with which they have fought each other in the last ten years. But beneath their squabbling they have much in common. Both grew to political maturity long before a Labour Government had been in office with a majority in the House of Commons; both tend to take it for granted that the Conservatives should be in power; neither has managed to adjust itself to Britain's present position in the world, or to her present standard of living; neither has any passionate desire for social change, or any concrete conception of the changes it wants.

This last point may seem implausible. The "Old Left," after all, constantly calls for change, and attacks the party leadership for failing to crusade for it. But although the "Old Left" honestly believes that it wants changes, and in fact does want them with its conscious mind, its actual behaviour shows that it cannot want them very much and does not mind if they have to be postponed indefinitely. The constituency party delegate who told the 1959 Labour Party conference that he didn't care if Labour lost "in 1964—or 1974—or 1984" doubtless imagines that he wants a Socialist society, and would be deeply offended if he were told that he is deceiving himself. The fact remains that if he really wanted Socialism he would not be prepared to wait twenty years for the next instalment. The truth is that for the "Old Left" as for the "Old Right," ideological slogans have a purely ritualistic significance. The "Old Right" likes nothing better than to dwell on the struggles of the past—provided that it is clearly understood that no struggles are to take place in the present. The "Old Left" likes nothing better than the noise and excitement of struggles in the present—provided that everyone realises that the struggle is on no account to end in victory.

Between them, these two groups have condemned the Left in this country to a decade of sterility, and have even produced a state of affairs in which the three cohorts of contemporary Liberalism look more radical, to voters under thirty, than the party of Aneurin Bevan and Ernest Bevin. If the Labour Party is to be saved, it must shake off their deadly embrace before it is too late. It must, in other words, turn for its inspiration, if not for its personnel, to a generation which takes contemporary society as its starting point, which wishes to fight contemporary battles against contemporary enemies, and which is capable of formulating contemporary grievances in contemporary terms.

BY THIS I DO NOT MEAN that the Labour Party should move to the "Right," if "Right" means a placid acceptance of society as it now exists. On the contrary, my objection to the Labour Party leaders over the past ten years is that they have been far too Right-wing, in that sense; and my real objection to what I have called the "Old Left" is that, judged by deeds rather than words, it has not been Left-wing at all. Nor do I mean that the Labour Party should adopt, as a final statement of its beliefs, the fiscal socialism

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of such people as Douglas Jay. Least of all do I mean that it should abandon its belief in public ownership, or cease to emphasise social expenditure and social consumption as against private expenditure and private consumption. On the contrary, I believe that Socialism is about equality of power as well as equality of status and wealth; and it seems to me that the final goal of a Socialist party must be to democratise social relationships, not just in the weak sense that middle-class people should speak nicely to their milkman, but in the strong sense that the milkman should have the ultimate control over the conditions of his work.

But it is useless to insist on these attitudes unless they are expressed in contemporary terms, and unless the programmes based on them are shown to have contemporary relevance. Some years ago, it looked as though the New Left might do this; and New Left writers like Raymond Williams and Alastair Macintyre have, in fact, made a useful contribution to Socialist thought by clearing away some of the utilitarian rubble which has obscured our theoretical understanding of modern society. But the theoretical contribution of the New Left has not been matched by an equal contribution on the level of immediate, day-to-day politics. On that level the contribution of the theoretically much less sophisticated Campaign for Democratic Socialism has been more valuable—and it is on that level that the greatest danger now threatens. In the long run what is needed is a synthesis between some of the theoretical insights of the New Left, and the practice of the CDS. In the short run, the CDS is surely right to insist that the practical problems are more urgent. Time, after all, is running out.

David Marquand

The Guerrillas

By Brian Crozier

ONE DAY in February, 1962, Sergeant James T. Davis of Tennessee was killed when his American army truck struck a land mine in the paddyfields of South Vietnam. Nine Vietnamese Army soldiers died with him. It was an important kill, perhaps a historic one, for Sergeant Davis was the first United States fatality in a war which the Americans have fought, until recently by proxy, ever since August, 1950, when the first Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) arrived in Saigon.

Sergeant Davis is not of course featured in these books,[1] which were written before he achieved, in death, the brief prominence of a mention in the news agency despatches. If I mention him now, it is because he seems to me to be a symbol and a signpost, and perhaps also the unnamed hero of at least two of these studies of guerrilla war. A symbol of American involvement and a signpost pointing to danger. The involvement and the danger are, however, only aspects of a deeper and simpler theme which is inherent in the question: is it possible for soldiers—*any* soldiers—to fight a successful guerrilla war in a country that is not their own?

This is not, of course, the first time a war has been fought by proxy (some commentators have suggested that this is just what Stalin did in Korea), but I cannot call to mind another instance of a country involving its soldiers in irregular warfare in totally alien surroundings, in an independent country and on the scale of the present American effort in Vietnam. Each of these qualifications is important. The British liaison groups dropped in Greece and Jugoslavia during World War II scarcely amounted to a British involvement, except in a very general sense. In Malaya, the British *were* deeply involved in irregular warfare,[2] but at a

[1] *Guerrillas in the 1960's: a background study of modern guerrilla tactics.* By Peter Paret and John W. Shy. Pall Mall. 15s.

Guerrilla Warfare. By Che Guevara. Monthly Review Press (New York). $3.50.

Communist Revolutionary Warfare: the Vietminh in Indochina. By George K. Tanham. Frederick A. Praeger (New York) for the Rand Corporation $5.00.

Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare. Translated and introduced by Brigadier-General Samuel B. Griffith. Praeger. $4.50.

Partisan Warfare. By Otto Heilbrunn. George Allen & Unwin. 21s.

[2] To what extent the 5,000 or more American servicemen now in Vietnam are actually "involved" in the war against Ho Chi Minh's communist guerrillas is a question of interpretation and semantics. Officially, these forces are there to train the South Vietnamese army in various tactics, including those of guerrilla war; they are not supposed to do any of the fighting themselves, though

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time when that country was still a colony. This gave them an unexpected advantage which the Americans lack in Vietnam, for they were able to synchronise their anti-guerrilla operations with a programme of political advancement leading to independence, and thus take the wind out of the sails of the Malayan Communist Party. It is not, however, within the power of the Americans to offer independence to South Vietnam since, on paper at least, Vietnam has been independent since 1954.

What they can offer, and do, is economic aid on an enormous scale, technical assistance and, on the military side, training and equipment, including helicopters and other anti-guerrilla gadgetry; plus those 5,000 men who may or may not be combat troops. It is an impressive effort, but I am not convinced that it amounts to more than, say, the provision of a 10-foot grand piano for a recital in the hope that a good soloist can be found locally and taught the rudiments of music in time for the performance.

THERE IS NO SECRET about the rudiments of guerrilla warfare, but much confusion about their application. Tactics are the common denominator of three quite distinct types of operation, and the confusion arises when the distinctions are blurred.

One is partisan warfare, which is probably as old as the history of war, and which, as practised by the Spanish *guerilleros* against Napoleon's invading army, gave the word "guerrilla" its international currency. Partisan warfare is patriotic and, in its purest form, non-ideological. No other ideology but patriotism was needed by America's own prototype partisan, Francis Marion, the "swamp fox," who, in 1780, 28 years before Napoleon invaded Spain, organised his company of twenty ragged men and boys and played havoc with Colonel Tarleton's regulars. Similarly Lawrence of Arabia, beyond encouraging Arab nationalism, did not need an ideological spur during the desert revolt.

The injection of ideology into guerrilla operations transforms partisan warfare into revolutionary war, the second of our types of operation. In terms of historical precedence, it was Lenin who first performed the injection (in his essay *Partisan Warfare*), but the real creator of revolutionary warfare in the modern sense was Mao Tse-tung. The theorist of his own experience, Mao distilled a doctrine of success, of powerful appeal and explosive force, in two essays: *Guerrilla Warfare* (1937) and *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War* (1938). The most famous of Mao's dicta was his comparison between the troops and the people on one hand, and the fish and water on the other. But the new element, the injection of ideology, lay in the following passage of *Guerrilla Warfare*:

> Without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail, as it must if its political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy, co-operation and assistance cannot be gained. The essence of guerrilla warfare is thus revolutionary in character. On the other hand, in a war of counter-revolutionary nature, there is no place for guerrilla hostilities. Because guerrilla war basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and co-operation.

This passage is the key to Mao's concept of revolutionary war, and therefore to the major examples of its successful application outside China: by the Vietminh in Indochina, by the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* and by "Che" Guevara in Cuba. It is, I suggest, possible to apply Mao's methods to a given situation without being a Communist, and indeed without accepting the Marxist concept of revolution. The inclusion of Algeria among my three examples illustrates the point. Conversely, however, it is equally possible for Communists to misapply Mao's lessons by sticking too closely to the Marxist concept; that is what happened in Malay, Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines in 1948 when local Communist parties, prompted by Zhdanov on behalf of Stalin, launched what proved to be abortive insurrections.

THE SUCCESSES and the failures alike contain instructive political lessons which Western strategists can ill afford to neglect. In military terms, the most striking of the successes was the defeat of the French Expeditionary Corps at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 by the Vietnamese People's Army under General Vo Nguyen Giap. By that time, the Vietnamese Communists were receiving artillery and other heavy equipment from China and the war had lost its guerrilla character. Its graduation from a

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they carry arms when accompanying Vietnamese troops on operations and are allowed to use them in self-defence. On the other hand, the former American advisory group in Vietnam was replaced by a "Military Assistance Command" in February and a month later Mr. Robert McNamara, the Defence Secretary, publicly admitted that the American servicemen were performing duties under combat conditions. President Kennedy, harried on this point at his press conference, said that no combat troops "as the term is commonly understood" had been sent to Vietnam. The trouble is that the common acceptances of words become blurred in such situations.

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guerrilla to a mass offensive was itself, however, a powerful vindication of Mao's theory of revolutionary war and of Giap's application of the theory to Vietnamese conditions.

Mao had evolved the concept of a protracted war in three stages. During the first the revolutionary troops must be ready, if necessary, to trade land and resources against the preservation of their own forces which, at that initial stage, would be weak and vulnerable. The second stage would begin when the enemy, his lines of communication stretched to the utmost, had stopped to consolidate his gains. During this stage guerrilla action would be intensified, while a regular army was being trained and equipped for the third and last stage—the revolutionary final offensive. In *La Guerre de la Libération et l'Armée Populaire* (1950),[3] Giap accepted Mao's three stages but elaborated the last. The general offensive, as Giap saw it, could come only after four political conditions had been fulfilled: the absolute moral superiority of the people's army; a great improvement in the physical resources of the revolutionary forces; an increasingly favourable international situation; and growing confidence on the part of the revolutionary leadership, in contrast with declining confidence on the enemy's side. In the last stage, guerrilla activity and a war of movement would coexist, while formal battles became more frequent in preparation of the climax of the final offensive.

In Indochina, the first stage ended in the spring of 1950, when it became apparent that the French could not hope to destroy the Vietminh's position in North Vietnam and Giap's forces were thus able to regroup in their mountain stronghold. The second stage was marked by the disastrous French retreats from the string of fortresses along the China border, from Laokay to Langson. The third stage didn't really begin until late in 1953, but Giap, in what was perhaps his one major error, tried unsuccessfully to leap into it before his 1950 successes. In his own words:

> At the beginning of 1949, having studied the internal and international situation, we launched the mission of preparation for the General Counter-Offensive (Tong Tan-cong). The preparatory mission is in reality included in the second phase. However, in 1949, the situation looked propitious, and the preparatory mission for the General Counter-Offensive was set ahead of time with the view of a shortening of the second guerrilla phase.[4]

One of Mao's major principles—that of identification with the people—was elaborated and given a particular twist in Giap's work, which termed it "security of the rear." This is one for the semanticists. To western strategists, "security of the rear" means that the rear echelons are functioning without enemy interference. To Giap, it meant that popular support for the revolutionary cause had been forged and consolidated. Food and hiding places, transport and above all intelligence, were the contributions expected of the "people." It was these that amounted to "security of the rear."

Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the real architect of Fidel Castro's victory over Batista, saw the Cuban insurrection as directly descended from the Chinese, Vietnamese and Algerian revolutions. As he put it in his *Guerrilla Warfare*:

> The China of Mao begins as an outbreak of worker groups in the South, which is defeated and almost annihilated. It succeeds in establishing itself and begins its advance only when, after the long march from Yenan, it takes up its base in rural territories and makes agrarian reform its fundamental goal. The struggle of Ho Chi Minh is based in the rice-growing peasants, who are oppressed by the French colonial yoke; with this force it is going forward to the defeat of the colonialists . . . In the case of Algeria, the grand idea of Arab nationalism has its economic counterpart in the fact that nearly all of the arable land of Algeria is utilised by a million French settlers.

As a Marxist, Guevara owed a debt to Mao's theories, though he shows no keenness for acknowledging it. His book is, indeed, a complete and original text-book in its own right, though it inevitably makes some of the same political observations as Mao and Giap. But there are passages in Guevara's book that deserve, and are doubtless receiving, close attention in the State Department and the Pentagon. These, for instance:

> Naturally, it is not to be thought that all conditions for revolution are going to be created through the impulse given to them by guerrilla activity. It must be kept in mind that there is a necessary minimum without which the establishment and consolidation of the first centre is not practicable. People must see clearly the futility of maintaining the fight for social goals within the framework of civil debate. When the forces of oppression come to maintain themselves in power against the established law, peace is considered already broken.
>
> Where a government has come into power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent

[3] Not to be confused with *Guerre du Peuple, Armée du Peuple*, a collection of Giap's articles and essays published in Hanoi in 1961.

[4] Report to commissars of the 98th infantry regiment, a captured document quoted by Bernard B. Fall in *The Vietminh Régime* (1954), a Cornell University data paper (mimeographed).

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or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerrilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted.

> Guerrilla warfare is a war of the masses, a war of the people.... The guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people of the area. This is an indispensable condition.... Bandit gangs have all the characteristics of a guerrilla army, homogeneity, respect for the leader, valour, knowledge of the ground, and, often, even good understanding of the tactics to be employed. The only thing missing is support of the people; and, inevitably, these gangs are captured and exterminated by the public force.

THE ALGERIAN CASE is, in some respects, the most illuminating of all, though none has been more deeply misinterpreted. The Moslem insurrection of November 1954, was a classic example of a social and nationalist revolution arising from the frustration of Algerian Moslem efforts to obtain reforms through legal channels. Its original leaders, Ben Bella (who was recently freed by General de Gaulle in connection with the Algerian cease-fire agreements) and Belkacem Krim, had served in the French army as non-commissioned officers. Though neither had served in Indo-China, many other Moslems had; and of course many of the French professional soldiers who set about crushing the insurrection had come to Algeria almost directly from Vietnam, where some of them had been captured and indoctrinated by the Vietminh. It is thus not surprising that the practice and theory of the Indo-China war played an important part in the military thinking of both sides in the Algerian conflict.

From the first, the French army officers who had become acquainted with Mao's and Giap's writings (they were a minority, but a very dynamic one) were convinced, and rightly, that the Algerian insurrection was another case of "revolutionary" war. They were wrong, however, in assuming that a "revolutionary" war is necessarily a Communist one and in identifying Arab nationalism with the hidden plans of the Cominform. They were even more wrong in supposing that they could, as it were, turn Mao's theories inside out and identify themselves with the Moslem population's hypothetical struggle against the oppressors of the *FLN*. Those who have remained prisoners of these dangerous illusions have formed the *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* and are murdering Frenchmen and Algerians alike in an effort to prove themselves right. They are the "centurions" of Jean Lartéguy's penetrating best-seller.[5]

IF THESE insurrectionary successes are instructive, so, too, are the failures. The Soviet and Chinese Communists must often have asked themselves why the "just revolutionary" wars in Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippines came to nothing. The answers, however, are not uniform. Neither, for that matter, were the situations in these four countries when the Communists started their insurrections in 1948.

Conditions were most propitious in Malaya and the Philippines, though for different reasons —in Malaya, because independence was not in sight, and in the Philippines because independence, which had come two years earlier, had not relieved the peasants from exploitation of the most shameless kind. In Burma, the soil was unpromising from the Communists' viewpoint, and in Indonesia it was forbiddingly sterile. The Burmese Communists had been one of the components of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, but the party had split into Stalinist and Trotskyist wings in 1946; moreover, independence had been granted by the Attlee government in January, 1948, and though the Communists immediately denounced this as a false independence, their insurrection was bound to seem irrelevant to the people whose very support, according to Mao's own theories, was essential to success. In Indonesia, the Communists had emerged from World War II as a small group, lacking prestige and influence. Although the Communists had infiltrated into many national organisations and gained control of the trade unions in 1948, their own preparations for the insurrection were hasty and ill-conceived, and their blow, when it came, must have been inexplicable to the Indonesian people, who had been told by its Nationalist leaders for years that the Dutch were the real enemy.

Perhaps the most interesting aspects of the Malayan and Philippine insurrections, however, was not the fact that they were defeated but that they were defeated *after* major initial successes.

This brings us to the third and last of the three types of operation involving guerrilla warfare: the counter-guerrilla type. The prefix, of course, transforms the character of the operation, though the common element of tactics remains. The foot patrols tracking down Communists in the jungles of Pahang or Johore, whether ochre-coloured Gurkhas or fresh-cheeked Lancashire lads, were themselves fighting a guerrilla war in the tactical sense, that is, a war in which success was the reward of surprise and information received. But to name these ingredients is to draw attention to their *political* character. At the outset, it was the

[5] I have developed these ideas at greater length in "The General's Generals," in ENCOUNTER, April, 1960. See also Philip Williams' article, "The French Army," in ENCOUNTER, December, 1961.

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Communists who had the advantages of surprise and information. It was they who knew what the security forces were going to do next and were there in ambush when they did it. How, then, did the security forces turn the tables on the Communists? How did they set about getting information from the villagers who, at first, had been giving it to the Communists?

THE ANSWERS to these questions demonstrate that, in counter-guerrilla war, as in revolutionary war itself, armed combat is merely the visible part of an iceberg. The submerged seven-eighths are a complex of initiatives and stratagems, of friendliness and bullying, and of belated but effective political enlightenment. There were negative priorities: the Communists had to be deprived of their own sources of food, shelter, and information. This was done, over a period of several years, by moving the population bodily into "new villages," provided with amenities in varying degrees, surrounded by barbed wire, and set on flat ground and astride main roads. Rewards were paid for information and fines inflicted for failing to give it. In sum, these measures were effective, but alone they would not have sufficed to defeat the Communists. The political basis of victory had to be laid, and this was the positive side of the equation. The Communists had gained obedience by terrorism on the one hand, and by castigating the "imperialists" and "colonialists" on the other. On the physical side, the victims of terrorism had to be protected; on the psychological and political sides, the authorities had to demonstrate to the population that the Communists had less to offer than they had. The second set of necessities was not grasped for the first three or four years of the Emergency, not indeed until the installation of Sir Gerald Templer as High Commissioner in the Federation of Malaya in February, 1952. Templer, however, brought with him an official pledge of rapid progress towards independence, and the energy to force the pace of democratic apprenticeship from village polls to general elections. All this time, the Communists were being driven deeper into more and more inhospitable jungle. Retreat had to be turned into defeatism, and this was accomplished, to an extraordinary degree, by the percipient drafting of "Surrender leaflets."

IN THE PHILIPPINES, the Communist-led Huks successfully represented themselves to a shockingly exploited peasantry as the legitimate successors of the agrarian secret societies that had incited revolt against absentee landlords in the 1920s. Official corruption and inefficiency, on a quite staggering scale, played into the hands of the Communists, and so did the indiscriminate brutality of the Constabulary. And yet, it took the late President Magsaysay, and some very able American advisers, only five months to smash the Huks, after more than five years of failure and frustration. How was it done? By a devastating combination of ruthless hunting spirit and benevolent reformism, by the rehabilitation of rebels and a new deal for the peasants who, for the first time, were protected in the courts against vicious prosecutions by landlords who found that the legal ceiling of 30 per cent of the value of the crop brought them a rent insufficient for their greed.

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH to suppose that the lessons of Malaya and the Philippines can be applied, as they stand, to Vietnam or Laos in 1962. Yet given care, a core of relevance does remain. The problems in Vietnam to-day are, of course, much more complicated than they need ever have been in Malaya or the Philippines. In Malaya, in particular, there were two uniquely favourable circumstances. Broadly speaking, the Communists were Chinese, and so were their supporters; this made them easy to isolate from the Malays, who were not necessarily pro-British even if anti-Chinese, but could be won over by political pledges, swiftly translated into action.

In Vietnam, the context is ethnically invisible, for friend and foe alike are Vietnamese. The camouflage is perfect, and the only ethnic signpost is the large, pink American in a surrounding sea of small brown men. The other favourable circumstance that existed in Malaya and the Philippines is one which geography denies to the anti-Communist in South Vietnam: the Huks and the Malayan Communists were cut off from friendly territory by sea or hostile land; the Viet Cong operating in South Vietnam are an extended arm of the Communist North, itself a geographical extension of Communist China. The war, then, is bound to be hard and long.

I am not, however, concerned with the Vietnamese war, as such, but with guerrilla warfare and the use of guerrilla forces in a foreign country. It seems clear that given favourable terrain, and a popular cause, there is practically no limit to the use of guerrillas in their own country; given a friendly base at short range as well, they tend to become invincible. In counter-guerrilla war in a dependent country, the forces of authority can do a good deal, once they have come to terms with reality and promised independence. In an independent country, the less

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foreign troops are seen the better.[6] There is every reason why the Americans should train and equip the South Vietnamese for guerrilla war although it is a pity they originally trained them for the wrong kind of war (and didn't listen to President Diem's plea for helicopters when he first made it in 1957). But it is easy to see that they may defeat their own ends if they start doing the fighting. As for *offensive* guerrilla operations, the South Vietnamese could do it—at least in theory—in North Vietnam, but the Americans would get nowhere.

Having said this, I don't think one should rule out the use of irregulars far from home, so long as they are supporting a popular uprising. The point is far from academic. The United States Special Forces began in a small way in 1952 with a hard core of immigrants from Eastern Europe who were to be parachuted into the satellites to foment revolt. There must have been an agonising temptation to use them in Hungary four years later, and there could arise circumstances justifying the use of carefully selected guerrillas (that is, with the right ethnic and linguistic qualifications) in countries where they could merge with the local population.

SOME BUT NOT ALL of the arguments I have used are to be found in the books that prompted this article. Unfortunately, they are not all stated in any one of the books, but emerge from a comparative study of all. The most general of the set is *Guerrillas in the 1960's*, but though the authors, Mr. Peter Paret and Mr. John W. Shy, have compiled a useful little guide, they fail to define with sufficient precision the factors that limit the use of guerrilla forces in alien territory. Mr. George K. Tanham, in *Communist Revolutionary Warfare*, explains the General Giap's adaptation of Mao's theories for the special circumstances of Vietnam. It is an able exposition, though the author, who has had military as well as distinguished academic experience, is happier with military tactics than the political background. There can be nothing but admiration, on the other hand, for Brigadier-General Griffith's translation of Mao's *Guerrilla Warfare* and for his introductory chapters, which provide as clear and concise a critical statement of the Communist theory of popular war as one could wish. With Dr. Otto Heilbrunn's *Partisan Warfare*, one is back in more general territory. This is probably the most comprehensive examination of guerrilla organisation, theories, and tactics yet available in English. Dr. Heilbrunn draws his examples both from the second world war and from post-war insurrections. He deals with counter-guerrilla operations as well as the use of guerrillas for offensive purposes. Very properly, he outlines the French army's theories of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary war and describes the more pragmatic British approach in Malaya. It would have been useful to have compared the two. In strictly military terms, the French were, in the end, successful in Algeria, but "victory," in the sense in which the French colonels understood the term, was unattainable. On the political side, the main difference between the French in Algeria and the British in Malaya was that the British didn't have a *Malaisie anglaise* myth to live down. The French, however, supplied the proof of Dr. Heilbrunn's key discovery:

> That the anti-guerrillas now have the means of shortening the protracted war and denying the guerrillas time to achieve superiority is by far the most important development in modern anti-guerrilla warfare.

The guerrillas, he adds, have not yet found the answer and probably never will. If the Americans can reassert the truth of this proposition in Vietnam, they will at least have the advantage over the French, in that they will not consider themselves defeated in the hour of victory.

[6] Should the Chinese ever decide to intervene in Vietnam, they would face the same difficulty, even though they would be less conspicuous than the Americans.

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Letter from Edinburgh

By Stephen Spender

WHEN IT BECAME clear that the French and Russian writers who were supposed to attend the Writers' Conference at Edinburgh were not going to come, it looked as if the whole enterprise would collapse. At a hastily convened Directing Committee meeting the subject of the first discussion was significantly changed from "Differences of Approach" to "Where the Novel is Now."

The absence of the French and Russians did indeed entirely change the character of the conference. For one thing, it enabled Malcolm Muggeridge, the chairman of the first discussion, to limit speeches to five minutes. Impossible to imagine a conference in which Sartre or Robbe-Grillet or Ehrenberg (or, for that matter, Alberto Moravia, who also failed to appear) spoke for five minutes only. The spectral conference which shadowed the actual meetings was one in which the other writers would have been a Greek chorus, commenting on French, analyses of the Situation, the Novelist, the Writer, the Object, the Left, the Right, Existence, etc., and on such fragments of post-Stalinist liberal thought, spiced with references to space ships, as might have fallen from Ilya Ehrenberg.

As it was there was an atmosphere of cats-away-the-mice will-play about these part-hilarious part-sombre proceedings. Not that the formidable American team of Mary McCarthy, Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, William Burroughs, and Nicola Tucci, are in any sense mice. But they were participants more than analysers and self-explicators, they guyed themselves, and switched from serious gaiety to tragic irony.

The conference achieved a very marked success with the public. The vast, hideous, barrel-like, many-tiered McEwan Hall, was half empty only on one day—that devoted to the discussion of *Scottish Writing Today*. This was a very curious occasion, and demonstrated the mixture of a few grains of salt with a fearful mess of haggis which makes the wisdom of holding writers' public debates so questionable. Douglas Young made the claim that the early lyrical poems of MacDiarmid were "equal to the world's best lyrics," and that the best poetry written in Scotland within the past thirty years was in Gaelic, by Somhairlie Maclean. Young's address justified the meeting. Apart from this, there was horse-play—Alexander Trocchi characterising the rhetoric of the Scottish nationalists as "turgid, petty, provincial, stale, cold-porridge, Bible-clasping nonsense," and adding, "of what is interesting in the last ten years or so in Scottish writing, I myself have written it all."

The Scottish writers had a carafe at their table which was filled—the journalists revealed afterwards—with neat whiskey. The geni of this Aladdin's lamp gradually took over, making the English members of the audience feel—as they were supposed no doubt to do—that it was all the fault of their persecution, their lack of understanding, their refusal to learn Gaelic or to spell out Lallans, that had diluted the lyric crystals of Hugh MacDiarmid with so much rhetorical spirits.

OBVIOUSLY, THE WRITERS' CONFERENCE *was* something of a *succès de scandale*. Perhaps the contrast between the spirit of John Knox—transubstantiated into Edinburgh's very ladder-like architecture which has the appearance of smoke-grained ascetic stone scaling an ever down-pouring heaven—and the scandalous statements of Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, William Burroughs and Van Het Reve made this inevitable. It provided a setting of fixed drama, like the Western Front, for the week-long session.

Mary McCarthy remarked that one of the difficulties of the novelist today was making not the future, but the present convincing. "For example," she said, "if I were to describe in a novel the conference which we have been attending, I would have to tone it down considerably to make it sound credible." As a matter of fact some of the speeches made were remarkably like those of more eccentric characters in an Angus Wilson novel. Perhaps it was he who wrote the scenario.

The press undoubtedly contributed to the success of the proceedings by reporting such spicy items as Van Het Reve's confession that he was a homosexual, and Norman Mailer's casual aside to the effect that Alexander Trocchi took heroin; though I should add that the confusion of the Scottish nationalist debate was such that when, on the same day, Mr. Van Het Reve made his announcement, it was received with sympathetic applause from the audience, and without astonishment, as though he were speaking as one other representative of an oppressed minority (perhaps from some remote separatist Hebridean isle). He had to make his confession again the next day to provoke any reaction from the audience, any report from the press. In the long run it acted as a Time Bomb which may yet blow up any future Edinburgh Writers' Conference.

On the day of the censorship debate the atmosphere of scandal was heightened by a long, hypocritical, unctuous speech by Maurice Girodias, publisher of the Olympia Press, in Paris, followed by a speech from an anonymous, bearded all-out-for-pornography, literature-be-damned, ex-publisher

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whom Mr. Mailer—he told us—simply loved, though he couldn't go "all the way" with him, and a declaration by Henry Miller which seemed to envisage the conference taking off from literature into action on Princes Street, a scene of the Rape of the Sabines—"Whenever we see a pretty woman we want to go to bed with her. Let's stop talking about it—let's just do it, think it, act it, get on with it." He looks too old for the part.

Dame Rebecca West, trembling with rare emotion, protested passionately against the no-holes-barred pornographer, recalling that the only occasion in her life when she had been really glad for the death penalty was seeing sentence of death passed on Julius Streicher. We forgot, she said, that pornography dealt largely with cruelty, and that the Nazi anti-semitic news-sheet *Der Stürmer* edited by Streicher used pornography as a weapon to promote mass murder.

The censorship discussion dealt almost entirely with matters such as sex and drugs, and scarcely at all with politics. In fact, if it had been political, I think it would have revealed a deep and unprofitable East-West rift on the platform and in the audience. What was really wrong was that the writers, concerned only with their own freedom, saw no reason for censoring anything ever. The all-out pornographer was considered irrelevant, and I suppose the answer to Dame Rebecca would have been that *Der Stürmer* was not literature, and Julius Streicher not a novelist. Yet if censorship was being discussed, realities like the press censorship (whether by political direction or the pressure of advertisers), the anxiety of parents about the effects of televised horror films on children, should have been discussed instead of our listening to the speech by the pornographic bookseller, or even to that of the publisher of the Olympia Press. These had little to do with literature anyway. (Incidentally, no one asked Mr. Girodias why he charges such exorbitant prices for his publications, or on what terms he commissions writers to write the books he specialises in, with their alluring titles: *The Sexual Life of Robinson Crusoe, Bottoms Up*, etc.)

ALTHOUGH THE AUDIENCE at the Writers' Conference applauded every speech politely, as the week wore on, there were signs of its beginning to feel that not many of those on the platform represented its earnest preoccupations. Doubtless if the conference had continued another week there would have been something like a revolution. People's Deputies would have arisen from the floor. There might even have been a secession followed by a Tennis Court Oath, and a Readers' Conference assembled in revolt against those aristocratic decadents, the American writers, and presided over by Hugh Macdiarmid in some grim Presbyterian hall of the kind in which Edinburgh seems so rich, even more hideous than McEwan.

When the Australian novelist, Hal Porter (claiming, perhaps rather unfairly, to represent the crass, unimaginative commonsense of Australia) got up and said he hadn't understood a word said by the writers on the platform, he received "thunderous applause." He contrasted William Burroughs' account of his "in-folding" method of writing (which apparently consists of cutting out a page of any other book and sticking it between the pages of the book he is writing), with a vision of himself, seated at the corner of the kitchen table, writing a book about ordinary Australians for other ordinary Australians who read it sitting at the corners of their kitchen tables.

The apparent frivolity of some of the writers' attitudes seemed to a good many of the audience an affront in a time when the world is threatened with self-extinction. Robert Jungk expressed this reaction at its most explicit when he pleaded that it was the duty of "the novelist" to humanise this "petrified world, bridge the chasms between sciences and humanity." (I am quoting here from one of Magnus Magnusson's excellent reports in *The Scotsman*):

> There should be people who can lift us up, let us see the picture as a whole, present a composite picture to help reorientate us.
>
> In this conference I feel there is too much passion for the end, for the dark, for destruction; there are plenty of people who want to live on into the future, and the novelists are creating nothing for them.

THE SPECTRE OF THE TWO CULTURES had raised its head. At this point I got up to protest against the imposition of an abstract task upon a theoretical novelist. The demand that the writer should write poems or novels which are in some way supposed to enable his readers to go out and save civilisation, puts a pressure on him which he quite rightly resents. It is a pressure already felt, and one fears that if it were overwhelming it would swamp the small worlds which can be created by art, in the immensity of social purpose and utility. The artist to-day has to fight for his "minute particulars."

All the same, the discussion should have been a good deal about this. One often had the feeling that while the novelists were complaining (in the parrot speech they have learned from the literary critics) that they cannot "communicate," they were declining to receive an urgent message from their public.

ONE REASON WHY the conference was a success which does credit both to the novelists and their public, was that some good things were said. Most of these have got lost in the reports of bickerings and discontents, though there are excellent summaries in *The Scotsman*. To conclude, I print from reports which I (accurately, I hope) copied down.

Angus Wilson, at the opening session, said that the English novel began by being the fictional expression of the middle class. On the whole, it was a conservative force, protecting a given way of life and manner of behaving. The novelists suggested that life lived in the country was better than that lived in the town. The novel defined an English way of life and defended it against cosmopolitanism ("internationalism" was the word he actually used). The English novel, defending rooted empirical living, did not achieve certain other things. It was not metaphysical or particularly interesting as ideas. It did not deal so much with

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questions of good and evil as of right and wrong. It was the novel of right and wrong manners. The English novel was weak then in philosophy, and had limitations. But it also derived from these its strength. It provided a coherent way of looking at things. It was concrete, not rhetorical and empty. It had given to the concrete situations it described a particular style which could be described as "the perfected prose of irony." But irony was in the long run self-defeating. The English novel adopted a self-deprecatory tone without exploring the ideas of a metaphysical universe, which might result from serious doubt.

The world of the right-and-wrong protected English values has broken up, and for this reason Angus Wilson distrusted those English novelists writing today who did not realise this. Kingsley Amis, Alan Sillitoe, John Braine, were trying to revive the idea of a coherent and valuable way of life (formerly that of the country) by simply transferring the myth of the country-dwelling virtuous middle class to that of the town-dwelling working class. These might be interesting sociological writers, but they weren't artists. The writer to whom he most looked for the pattern of the future was Ivy Compton Burnett, who kept to the English novelistic tradition but turned it against itself, inside out, using it ironically.

Mary McCarthy said the only thing about which she agreed with Angus Wilson was that the national novel was dying in England. As for America, the American novel as a social document scarcely exists as serious art. Nor has much happened in America to develop the national novel. The most serious young writers in America ask the Identity Question—"Who am I anyway?" It is the self-interrogation of the *I*. "What is this mysterious thing, a Jew, that I am?" There is doubt as to one's own existence. Apart from this there were rare and special novels like *A Long and Happy Life*, by Reynolds Price.

She thought that the English novel had shrunk. What English novels had today in common was a kind of smallness, extreme carefulness, like that of many English handwritings. She couldn't agree with Angus Wilson's prophecy that the future lay with Ivy Compton Burnett. For one thing you can't imagine that writers in the future will write anything as mannered as her novels. Mary McCarthy always had the feeling with any of Ivy Compton Burnett's novels that she was reading the same book. Nor did she have much confidence in the future of in-turned irony.

Mary McCarthy then hatcheted the French novel (lucky the French hadn't come!) which she considered not so much fiction as a branch of dress making. (She made an exception of Nathalie Sarraute.)

She must ask herself, she said, not whether there were novels that pleased her but whether she had read any recently that gave her the feeling that something new was happening. Those that gave her this feeling were *Pale Fire* by Vladimir Nabokov, and *The Naked Lunch* by William Burroughs. These suggested not a return to the national novel but the possibilities of the international novel. She thought that the future lay perhaps with novels of exile, of wanderers over the earth, whose predecessors were Joyce and Lawrence. She distinguished the novel of exiles from that of expatriates. The expatriate novel chose a particular place—Athens, Alexandria, Rome, Paris, and made it an ideal. But statelessness was perhaps the future condition of humanity, and thus the novels of exiles were the voice of the future. Roaming across the face of the earth seems to be the new subject.

L. P. Hartley talked about commitment, first remarking that the idea of commitment would have been anathema to Flaubert, and adding "I can't think of any exclusively platform or propagandist novel that is also a great novel. There have been plenty of second rate ones, Charles Reade's for instance, who wrote to show up prison systems and private lunatic asylums." After this warning, what followed came rather surprisingly from Hartley: "It seems to me that it is possible some form of commitment, even political commitment, might become inevitable. The great Victorian novels were about individuals. They flourished with individualism and in the stronghold of individualism, the middle class. Whence does the finest culture come, if the middle class is not its home? demanded Goethe. But individualism and the middle class are now on the wane and all the arts are less humanistic than they used to be. It may be that novelists will no longer be interested in the human personality. Abstract ideas or perhaps scientific inventions will take the place of characterisation, and there are signs that this, in so-called science fiction, for instance, and in certain French novelists, is already happening. It is much easier to be committed to an abstraction than to a view of human nature based on the study of individuals; and if abstractions win the day, commitment may become inevitable and with it the extinction of the novel as a commentary on human life."

POSTSCRIPT. Alexander Trocchi wrote in the book in which I was noting the above—"Dear S., If the 'novel' develops any further, it must be in the sense of opening up to include new and quite strange elements, and surely there will come a point where we shall not meaningfully be able to apply the term. . . .

"And about its reflecting the fragmentation of things and ideas—I meant no simple one to one correlation, although quite what I meant I shall probably never know.

"Lastly, true 1905 doesn't necessarily mean untrue for 1962."

The last sentence refers to my protesting that everything Trocchi said could have come out of an early Expressionists' Manifesto. I hope I have made it clear that the bickerings and the publicity they aroused were exaggerated. In the course of the five days nothing was properly discussed but some interesting things were said, not least by the interventions of Lawrence Durrell, Rosamund Lehmann, Richard Hughes, and Colin MacInnes.

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Europe looks outwards

This is Europa at the foot of the Albert Memorial (1872), staring out at the strange world of nine decades later. In August THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT published an important special number on the vast extension overseas of our own language and literature which this century has seen. In this issue dated September 21 it fills out the picture with a further special number dealing both with the part played by other world languages, such as French and Spanish, and with the wider question of Europe's cultural influence in the world. The Commonwealth? Europe? Politically these may at the moment be rival conceptions, but so far as literature and ideas are concerned both are parts of a larger whole.

A dozen problems spring to mind. Is there a revival of Portuguese writing in BRAZIL to match the achievements of modern Brazilian architecture? What is the relationship between Spanish literature and the countries of LATIN AMERICA? Can the French literary tradition survive in NORTH AFRICA and the MIDDLE EAST; and what is happening to French-language writing in CANADA, and to French negro writing in BLACK AFRICA and MADAGASCAR? How persistent is the European tradition in ISRAEL? What kind of picture of European literature is available in CHINA? What is the impact of European culture in AUSTRALIA today? Are European influences on the novel in the UNITED STATES as strong now as they were in the time of Melville and James; and is American English the *lingua franca* of the mid-twentieth century?

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Vladimir Nabokov's "Pale Fire"

By Mary McCarthy

PALE FIRE* is a Jack-in-the-box, a Fabergé gem, a clockwork toy, a chess problem, an infernal machine, a trap to catch reviewers, a cat-and-mouse game, a do-it-yourself novel. It consists of a 999-line poem of four cantos in heroic couplets together with an editor's preface, notes, and index. When the separate parts are assembled, according to the manufacturer's directions, and fitted together with the help of clues and cross-references, which must be hunted down as in a paper-chase, a novel on several levels is revealed, and these "levels" are not the customary "levels of meaning" of modernist criticism but planes in a fictive space, rather like those houses of memory in medieval mnemonic science, where words, facts, and numbers were stored till wanted in various rooms and attics, or like the houses of astrology into which the heavens are divided.

The poem has been written by a sixty-one-year-old American poet of the homely, deceptively homely, Robert Frost-type who teaches at Wordsmith College in New Wye, Appalachia; his name is John Shade, his wife is called Sybil, née Irondell or Swallow; his parents were ornithologists; he and his wife had a fat, plain daughter, Hazel, who killed herself young by drowning in a lake near the campus. Shade's academic "field" is Pope, and his poem, *Pale Fire*, is in Pope's heroic measure; in content, it is closer to Wordsworthian pastures—rambling, autobiographical, full of childhood memories, gleanings from Nature, interrogations of the universe: a kind of American *Prelude*. The commentator is Shade's colleague, a refugee professor from Zembla, a mythical country north of Russia. His name is Charles Kinbote; he lives next door to Shade in a house he has rented from Judge Goldsworth, of the law faculty, absent on sabbatical leave. (If, as the commentator points out, you recombine the syllables of "Wordsmith" and "Goldsworth," you get Goldsmith and Wordsworth, two masters of the heroic couplet.) At the moment of writing, Kinbote has fled Appalachia and is living in a log cabin in a motor court at Cedarn in the Southwest; Shade has been murdered, fortuitously, by a killer calling himself Jack Grey, and Kinbote, with the widow's permission, has taken his manuscript to edit in hiding, far from the machinations of two rival Shadians on the faculty. Kinbote, known on the campus as the Great Beaver, is a bearded vegetarian pederast, who has had bad luck with his youthful "ping-pong partners"; a lonely philologue and long-standing admirer of the poet (he has translated him into Zemblan), he has the unfortunate habit of "dropping in" on the Shades, spying on them (they don't draw theirs) with binoculars from a post at a window or in the shrubbery; jealous of Mrs. Shade, he is always available for a game of chess or a "good ramble" with the tolerant poet, whom he tirelessly entertains with his Zemblan reminiscences. "I don't see how John and Sybil can stand you," a faculty wife hisses at him in the grocery store. "What's more, you are insane."

That is the plots' ground floor. Then comes the *piano nobile*. Kinbote believes that he has inspired his friend with his tales of his native Zembla, of its exiled king, Charles the Beloved, and the Revolution that started in the Glass Works; indeed, he has convinced himself that the poem is in a sense *his* poem—the occupational mania of commentators—and cannot be properly understood without his gloss, which narrates Zemblan events paralleling the poet's composition. What at once irresistibly peeps out from Kinbote's notes is that he himself is none other than Charles the Beloved, disguised in a beaver as an academic; he escaped from Zembla in a motor-boat and flew to America after a short stay on the Riviera; an American sympathiser, a trustee of Wordsmith, Mrs. Sylvia O'Donnell, has found a post on the language faculty. His colleagues (read "mortal enemies") include—besides burly Professor Hurley, head of the department and an adherent of *"engazhay"* literature—Professor C., a literary Freudian and owner of an ultra-modern villa, a certain Professor Pnin, and an instructor, Mr.

* *Pale Fire*. By VLADIMIR NABOKOV. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson*, 21s.

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Gerald Emerald, a young man in a bow tie and green velvet jacket. Meanwhile the Shadows, the Secret Police of Zembla, have hired a gunman, Jakob Gradus, alias Jacques d'Argus, alias Jacques Degré, alias Jack Grey, to do away with the royal exile. Gradus' slow descent on Wordsmith synchronises, move by move, with Shade's composition of *Pale Fire*; the thug, wearing a brown suit, a trilby, and carrying a Browning, alights on the campus the day the poem is finished. In the library he converges with Mr. Gerald Emerald, who obligingly gives him a lift to Professor Kinbote's house. There, firing at the king, he kills the poet; when the police take him, he masks his real purpose and identity by claiming to be a lunatic escaped from a local asylum.

THIS SECOND STORY, the *piano nobile*, is the "real" story as it appears to Kinbote of the events leading to the poet's death. But the real, real story, the story underneath, has been transpiring gradually, by degrees, to the reader. Kinbote is mad. He is a harmless refugee pedant named Botkin who teaches in the Russian department and who fancies himself to be the exiled king of Zembla. This delusion, which he supposes to be his secret, is known to the poet, who pities him, and to the campus at large, which does not—the insensate woman in the grocery store was expressing the general opinion. The killer is just what he claims to be—Jack Grey, an escaped criminal lunatic, who has been sent to the State Asylum for the Insane by, precisely, Judge Goldsworth, Botkin's landlord. It is Judge Goldsworth that the madman intended to murder, not Botkin, alias Kinbote, alias Charles the Beloved; the slain poet was the victim of a case of double mistaken identity (his poem too is murdered by its editor, who mistakes it for something else). The clue to Gradus-Grey, moreover, was in Botkin's hands when, early in the narrative, he leafed through a sentimental album kept by the judge containing photographs of the killers he had sent to prison or condemned to death: "... a strangler's quite ordinary-looking hands, a self-made widow, the close-set merciless eyes of a homicidal maniac (somewhat resembling, I admit, the late Jacques d'Argus), a bright little parricide aged seven...." He got, as it were, a preview of the coming film —a frequent occurrence in this kind of case. Projected on to Zembla, in fact, are the daily events of the campus. Gradus' boss, Uzumrudov, one of the higher Shadows, met on the Riviera in a green velvet jacket, is slowly recognised to be "little Mr. Anon.," alias Gerald Emerald, alias Reginald Emerald, a teacher of freshman English, who has made advances to (read in reverse "had advances made to him by") Professor Botkin, and who is also the author of a rude anonymous note suggesting that Professor Botkin has halitosis. The paranoid political structure called Zembla in Botkin's exiled fantasy—with its Extremist government and secret agents—is a transliteration of a pederast's persecution complex, complicated by the commonplace conspiracy-mania of a faculty common-room.

But there is in fact a "Zembla," behind the Iron Curtain. The real, real story, the plane of ordinary sanity and common sense, the reader's presumed plane, cannot be accepted as final. The explanation that Botkin is mad will totally satisfy only Professors H. and C. and their consorts, who can put aside *Pale Fire* as a detective story, with the reader racing the author to the solution. *Pale Fire* is not a detective story, though it includes one. Each plane or level in its shadow box proves to be a false bottom; there is an infinite perspective regression, for the book is a book of mirrors.

SHADE'S POEM begins with a very beautiful image, of a bird that has flown against a window and smashed itself, mistaking the reflected sky in the glass for the true azure.

I was the shadow of the waxwing slain
By the false azure of the window pane.

This image is followed by another, still more beautiful and poignant, a picture of that trick of optics whereby a room at night when the shades have not been drawn, is reflected in the dark landscape outside.

Uncurtaining the night I'd let dark glass
Hang all the furniture above the grass
And how delightful when a fall of snow
Covered my glimpse of lawn and reached up so
As to make chair and bed exactly stand
Upon that snow, out in that crystal land!

"That crystal land," notes the commentator, loony Professor Botkin. "Perhaps an allusion to Zembla, my dear country." On the plane of everyday sanity, he errs. But on the plane of poetry and magic, he is speaking the simple truth, for Zembla is Semblance, Appearance, the mirror-realm, the Looking Glass of Alice. This is the first clue in the treasure-hunt, pointing the reader to the dual or punning nature of the whole work's composition. *Pale Fire*, a reflective poem, is also a prism of reflections. Zembla, the land of seeming, now governed by the Extremists, is the antipodes of Appalachia, in real homespun democratic America, but it is also the *semblable*, the twin, as seen in a distorting glass. Semblance becomes resemblance. John Shade and Gradus have the same birthday—July 5th.

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The word Zembla can be found in Pope's *Essay on Man* (Epistle 2, v); there it signifies the fabulous extreme north, the Hyperborean land of the polar star.

But where the Extreme of Vice was ne'er agreed.
Ask where's the North? At York, 'tis on the Tweed;
In Scotland, at the Oroades, and there,
At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where;
No creature owns it in the first degree,
But thinks his neighbour farther gone than he.

Pope is saying that vice, when you start to look for it, is always somewhere else—a will-o'-the-wisp. This somewhere else is Zembla, but it is also next door, at your neighbour's. Now Botkin is Shade's neighbour and *vice versa*; moreover, people who live in glass houses.... Shade has a vice, the bottle, the festive glass, and Botkin's vice is that he is an *invert*, *i.e.*, turned upside down, as the antipodes are, relative to each other. Further, the reader will notice that the word Extreme, with a capital (Zemblan Extremists) and the word degree (Gradus is degree in Russian), both occur in these verses, in the neighbourhood of Zembla, pre-mirroring *Pale Fire*, as though by second sight. Reading on, you find (lines 267–268), the following lines quoted by John Shade in a discarded variant:

See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
The sot a hero, lunatic a king....

The second line is *Pale Fire* in a nutshell. Pope continues (lines 267–270):

The starving chemist in his golden views
Supremely blest, the poet in his muse.

Supremely Blest is the title of John Shade's book on Pope. In this section of the poem, Pope is playing on the light and shade antithesis and on what an editor calls the "pattern of paradoxical attitudes" to which man's dual nature is subject. The lunatic Botkin, incidentally, playing king, *inverts* his name.

To leave Pope momentarily and return to Zembla, there is an actual Nova Zembla, a group of islands in the Arctic Ocean, north of Archangel. The name is derived from the Russian Novaya Zemlya, which means "new land." Or *terre neuve*, Newfoundland, the New World. Therefore, Appalachia = Zembla. But since for Pope Zembla was roughly equal to Greenland, then Zembla must be a green land, an Arcadia. Arcady is a name often bestowed by Professor Botkin on New Wye, Appalachia, which also gets the epithet "green," and he quotes *"Et in Arcadia ego,"* for Death has come to Arcady in the shape of Gradus, ex-glazier and killer, the emissary of Zembla on the other side of the world. Green-jacketed Gerald Emerald gives Death a lift in his car.

The complementary colour to green is red. Zembla has turned red after the revolution that began in the Glass Factory. Green and red flash on and off in the narrative like traffic signals and sometimes reverse their message. Green appears to be the colour of death and red the colour of life; red is the king's colour and green the colour of his enemies. Green is pre-eminently the colour of seeming (the theatrical green-room), the colour, too, of camouflage, for Nature, being green at least in summer, can hide a green-clad figure in her verdure. But red is a colour that is dangerous to a wearer who is trying to melt into the surroundings. The king escapes from his royal prison wearing a red wool cap and sweater (donned in the dark) and he is only saved by the fact that forty loyal Karlists, his supporters, put on red wool caps and sweaters too (red wool yarn—yarn comes from Latin "soothsayer"—is protective Russian folk magic) and confuse the Shadows with a multitude of false kings. Yet when the king arrives in America, he floats down with a green silk parachute (because he is in disguise?), and his gardener at New Wye, a Negro whom he calls Balthasar (the black king of the three Magi), has a green thumb, a red sweater, and is seen on a green ladder; it is the gardener who saves the king's life when Gradus, alias Grey, appears.

Now when Alice went through the looking-glass she entered a chess game as a white pawn. There is surely a chess game or chess problem in *Pale Fire*, played on a board of green and red squares. The poet describes his residence as "the frame-house between Goldsworth and Wordsmith on its square of green"; the Rose Court in the royal palace in Onhava (Far Away), the Zemblan capital, is a sectile mosaic with rose petals cut out of red stone and large thorns cut out of green marble. There is much stress, in place-descriptions, on framing, and reference is made to chess problems of "the solus rex type." The royal fugitive may be likened to a lone king running away on the board. But in problems of the solus rex type, the king, though outnumbered, is, curiously enough, not always at a disadvantage; for example, a king and two knights cannot checkmate a lone king—the game is stalemated or drawn. All the chess games played by characters in the story are draws. The plot of the novel ends in a kind of draw, if not a stalemate. The king's escape from the castle is doubtless castling.

Chess is the perfect mirror-game, with the pieces drawn up confronting each other as in a looking-glass; moreover, castles, knights, and bishops have their twins as well as their opposite numbers. The piece, by the way, called the

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bishop in English is in French *"le fou"* or madman. In the book there are two opposed lunatics at large: Gradus and Kinbote. The moves made by Gradus from the Zemblan capital to Wordsmith in New Wye parallel spatially the moves made in time by the poet toward the completion of his poem; at the zero hour, there is a convergence of space and time. What is shadowed forth here may be a game of three-dimensional chess—three simultaneous games played by a pair of chess wizards on three transparent boards arranged vertically. A framed crystal land, the depth-echo of the bedroom projected on to the snow.

The moves of Gradus and Botkin also hint some astrological progression. Botkin reached Judge Goldsworth's "chateau" on February 5, 1959; on Monday, February 16, he was introduced to the poet at lunch at the Faculty Club; on March 14, he dined at the Shades', etc. Shade's *magnum opus* was begun on July 1, under the sign of Cancer; he walks sideways, like a crab. The poem is completed (except for the last line) the day of Gradus' arrival, July 21, on the cusp between Cancer and Leo. As the poet walks to his death, the sound of horseshoes is heard from a neighbouring yard (Horseshoe Crabs?). The fateful conjunction of three planets seems to be indicated, and the old astrological notion of events on earth mirroring the movements of the stars in the sky.

THE TWINNING AND DOUBLING proliferate; the multiplication of levels refracts a prismatic, opaline light on Faculty Row. Zembla is not just land but earth—"Terra the Fair, an orbicle of jasp," as John Shade names the globe; a Zemblan feuilletonist had fancifully dubbed its capital Uranograd—"Sky City." The fate of Charles the Beloved is a rippling reflection of the fate of Charles II of England on his travels, of Bonnie Prince Charlie, and of the deposed Shakespearean rulers for whom streets are named in Onhava—Coriolanus Lane, Timon Alley. Prospero of *The Tempest* pops in and out of the commentary, like a Fata Morgana, to mislead the reader into looking for "pale fire" in Shakespeare's swansong. It is not there, but *The Tempest* is in *Pale Fire*: Prospero's emerald isle, called the Ile of Divels, in the New World, Iris and Juno's peacock, sea caves, the chess game of Ferdinand and Miranda, Prospero's enchantments, his lost kingdom, and Caliban, whom he taught language, that supreme miracle of mirroring.

Nature's imitations of Nature are also evoked —echo, the mocking-bird perched on a television aerial ("TV's huge paper-clip"), the iridescent eyes of the peacock's fan, the cicada's emerald

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case, a poplar tree's rabbit-foot—all the "natural shams" of so-called protective mimicry by which, as Shade says in his poem,

The reed becomes a bird, the knobby twig
An inchworm and the cobra head, a big
Wickedly folded moth.

These disguises are not different from the exiled king's red cap and sweater (like the markings of a bird) or the impersonation of an actor. Not only Nature's shams but Nature's freaks dance in and out of the lines: rings around the moon, rainbows and sun-dogs (bright spots of light, often coloured, sometimes seen on the ring of the solar halo), the heliotrope or sun-turner, which, by a trick of language, is also the blood-stone, Muscovy glass (mica), phosphorescence (named for Venus, the Morning Star), mirages, the roundlet of pale light called the *ignis fatuus*, everything speckled, freckled, curiously patterned, dappled, quaint (as in Hopkins' poem, "Pied Beauty"). The arrowy tracks of the pheasant, the red heraldic barrings of the Vanessa butterfly, snow crystals. And the imitation of natural effects in manufactures: stained glass, paperweights containing snowstorms and mountain views, glass eyes. Not to mention other curios like the bull's eye lantern, glass giraffes, Cartesian devils. Botkin, the bearded urning, is himself a prime "freak of Nature," like Humbert Humbert. And the freakish puns of language ("Red Sox wins 5/4 on Chapman's Homer"), "muscat" (a cat-and-mouse game), anagrams, mirror-writing, such words as versipel. The author loves the ampersand and dainty diminutives ending in "let" or "et" (nymphet). Rugged John Shade is addicted to "word-golf," which he induces Botkin to play with him. Botkin's best scores are hate-love in three (late-lave-love), lass-male in four (last-mast-malt-male), live-dead in five. If you play word-golf with the title words, you can get pale-hate in two and fire-love in three. Or pale-love in three and fire-hate in three.

THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS of scholarship, cases of mistaken word-identity, also enchant this dear author. *E.g.*, "alderwood" and "alderking" keep cropping up in the gloss with overtones of northern forest magic. What can an alderking be, excluding chief or ruler, which would give king-king, a redundancy? "Erle" is the German word for alder, and the alder tree, which grows in wet places, has the curious property of not rotting under water. Hence it is a kind of magic tree, very useful for piles supporting bridges. And John Shade, writing of the loss of his daughter, echoes Goethe's "The Erl-King."

Who rides so late in the night and the wind?
It is the writer's grief. It is the wild
March wind. It is the father with his child.

Now the German scholar, Herder, in translating the elf-king story from the Danish, mistook the word for elf for the word for alder. So it is not really the alderking but the elf- or goblin-king, but the word alder touched by the enchanted word elf becomes enchanted itself and dangerous. Goethe's erl-king, notes Kinbote, fell in love with the traveller's little boy. Therefore alderking means an eerie, dangerous invert found in northern forest-countries.

Similar sorcerer's tricks are played with the word stone. The king in his red cap escaping through the Zemblan mountains is compared to a *Steinmann*, which, as Kinbote explains, is a pile of stones erected by alpinists to commemorate an ascent; these *Steinmensch*, apparently, like snowmen, were finished off with a red cap and scarf. The *Steinmann*, then, becomes a synonym for one of the king's disguised followers in red cap and sweater (*e.g.*, Julius Steinmann, Zemblan patriot). But the *Steinmann* has another meaning, not divulged by Kinbote; it is the *homme de pierre* or *homme de St. Pierre* of Pushkin's poem about Don Giovanni, in short the stone statue, the Commendatore of the opera. Anyone who sups with the stone-man, St. Peter's deputy, will be carried off to hell. The mountain that the *Steinmann*-king has to cross is wooded by Mandevil Forest; toward the end of his journey he meets a disguised figure, Baron Mandevil, man of fashion, catamite, and Zemblan patriot. Read man-devil, but read also Sir John Mandeville, medieval impostor and author of a book of voyages who posed as an English knight (perhaps a chess move is indicated?). Finally the stone (glancing by glass-houses) is simply the stone thrown into a pool or lake and starting the tremulous magic of widening ripples that distort the clear mirroring of the image—as the word stone itself, cast into the pool of this paragraph has sent out wavelets in a widening circle.

LAKES—the original mirrors of primeval man—play an important part in the story. There are three lakes near the campus, Omega, Ozero, and Zero (Indian names, notes Botkin, garbled by the early settlers); the last time the king saw his consort, Disa, Duchess of Payn (sadism; theirs was a "white" marriage) she was mirrored in an Italian lake. The poet's daughter has drowned herself in Lake Omega; her name ("... in lone Glenartney's hazel shade") is taken from *The Lady of the Lake*. But a hazel wand is also a divining-rod, used to find water; in her girlhood, the poor child, witch Hazel, was a poltergeist.

Trees, lakes, butterflies, stones, peacocks—

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there is also the waxwing, the poet's alter ego, which appears in the first line of the poem (duplicated in the last, unwritten line). If you look up the waxwing in the *O.E.D.*, you will find that it is "a passerine bird of the genus Ampelis, esp. A. garrulus, the Bohemian waxwing. Detached from the chatterers by Monsieur Vieillot." The poet, a Bohemian, is detached from the chatterers of the world. The waxwing (belonging to the king's party) has red-tipped quills like sealing-wax. Another kind of waxwing is the Cedar Waxwing. Botkin has fled to Cedarn. The anagram of Cedarn is nacred.

More suggestively (in the leering, popular sense), the anal canal or "back door" or *"porte étroite"* is linked with a secret passage leading by green-carpeted stairs to a green door (which in turn leads to the green-room of the Onhava National Theatre), discovered by the king and a boyhood bed-fellow. It is through this secret passage (made for Iris Acht, a leading actress) that the king makes his escape from the castle. Elsewhere a "throne," in the child's sense of "the toilet," is identified naughtily with the king. When gluttonous Gradus arrives in Appalachia, he is suffering from a severe case of diarrhœa, induced by a conflict of "French" fries, consumed in a Broadway restaurant, with a genuine French ham sandwich, which he had saved from his Nice–Paris railway trip. The discharge of his bowels is horribly paralleled with the discharge of the automatic pistol he is carrying; he is the modern automatic man. In discharging the chamber of his pistol he is exercising what to him is a "natural" function; earlier the slight sensory pleasure he derives from the act of murder is compared to the pleasure a man gets from squeezing a blackhead.

This is no giggling, high-pitched, literary camp. The repetitions, reflections, misprints, and quirks of Nature are taken as signs of the presence of a pattern, the stamp or watermark of a god or an intelligence. There is a web of sense in creation, old John Shade decides—not text but texture, the warp and woof of coincidence. He hopes to find

> *Some kind of correlated pattern in the game,*
> *Plexed artistry, and something of the same*
> *Pleasure in it as they who played it found.*

The world is a sportive work of art, a mosaic, an iridescent tissue. Appearance and "reality" are interchangeable; all appearance, however deceptive, is real. Indeed it is just this faculty of deceptiveness (natural mimicry, *trompe l'oeil*, imposture), this power of imitation, that provides the key to Nature's cipher. Nature has "the artistic temperament"; the galaxies, if scanned, will be an iambic line.

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Kinbote and Shade (and the author) agree in a detestation of symbols, except those of typography and, no doubt, natural science ("H_2O is a symbol for water"). They are believers in signs, pointers, blazes, notches, clues, all of which point into a forest of associations, a forest in which other woodmen have left half-obliterated traces. All genuine works contain precognitions of other works or reminiscences of them (and the two are the same), just as the flying lizard already possessed a parachute, a fold of skin enabling it to glide through the air.

SHADE, as an American, is naturally an agnostic, and Kinbote, a European, is a vague sort of Christian who speaks of accepting "God's presence—a faint phosphorescence at first, a pale light in the dimness of bodily life, and a dazzling radiance after it." Or, more concessively, "Somehow Mind is involved as a main factor in the making of the universe." This Mind of Kinbote's seems to express itself most lucidly in dualities, pairs, twins, puns, couplets, like the plots of Shakespeare's early comedies. But this is only to be expected if one recalls that to make a cut-out heart or lacy design for Valentine's Day all a child needs is scissors and a folded piece of paper—the fold makes the pattern, which, unfolded, appears as a miracle. It is the quaint principle of the butterfly. Similarly, Renaissance artificers used to make wondrous "natural" patterns by bisecting a veined stone, an agate or a carnelian, as you would bisect an orange. Another kind of magic design is the child's trick of putting a piece of paper on the cover of a school book and shading it with a pencil; wonderfully, the stamped title, CAESAR'S GALLIC WARS, emerges, as though embossed, in white letters. This, upside down, is the principle of the pheasant's hieroglyph in the snow or the ripple marks on the sand, to which we cry "How beautiful!" There is no doubt that duplication, stamping, printing (children's transfers), is one of the chief forms of magic, a magic we also see in Jack Frost's writing on the window, in jet trails in the sky—an intelligent spirit seems to have signed them. But it is not only in symmetry and reproduction that the magic signature of Mind is discerned, but in the very imperfections of Nature's work, which appear as guarantees of authentic, hand-knit manufacture. That is, in those blemishes and freckles and streakings and moles already mentioned that are the sports of creation, and what is a vice but a mole?

NABOKOV'S tenderness for human eccentricity, for the freak, the "deviate," is partly the naturalist's taste for the curious. But

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his fond, wry compassion for the lone black piece on the board goes deeper than classificatory science or the collector's chop-licking. Love is the burden of *Pale Fire*, love and loss. Love is felt as a kind of home-sickness, that yearning for union described by Plato, the pining for the other half of a once-whole body, the straining of the soul's black horse to unite with the white. The sense of loss in love, of separation (the room *beyond*, projected on to the snow, the phantom moves of the chess knight, that deviate piece, *off* the board's edge on to ghostly squares), binds mortal men in a common pattern—the elderly couple watching TV in a lighted room, and the "queer" neighbour watching *them* from his window. But it is most poignant in the outsider: the homely daughter stood up by her date, the refugee, the "queen," the bird smashed on the window pane.

Pity is the password, says Shade, in a philosophical discussion with Kinbote; for the agnostic poet, there are only two sins—murder and the deliberate infliction of pain. In the exuberant high spirits, the wild laughter of the book, there is a cry of pure pain. The compassion of Nabokov stops violently short of Gradus, that grey, degraded being, the shadow of a Shade. The modern, mass-produced, jet-propelled, newspaper-digesting automatic killer is described with a fury of intimate hatred; he is Death on the prowl. Unnatural Death is the natural enemy of the delicate gauzy ephemerids who are under Nabokov's special protection, like the nymphet ephemerida who "died" to Humbert Humbert when she passed puberty. Kinbote makes an "anti-Darwinian" aphorism: "The killer is *always* his victim's inferior."

Gradus in his broad-brimmed hat, with his umbrella and black travelling bag, figures as a kind of Bat-Man out of children's comic books, whirring darkly through space; yet he is also Mercury (the mercury stands at so many *degrees* in the thermometer; there is a headless statue of Mercury in the secret passage leading from the palace to the theatre), conductor of souls to the underworld, Zeus's undercover agent, god of commerce, travel, manual skill, and thievery. In short, a "Jack of small trades and a killer," as Kinbote calls Jacques d'Argus, who was a pharmacology student at one time (the caduceus) and a messenger boy for a firm of cardboard box manufacturers; Mercury or Hermes was the slayer of the giant *Argus* set to watch on Io by Juno-Hera; the hundred eyes of Argus were set in the tail of the peacock, Juno's familiar. Hermes, born in Arcady, is simply a stone or herm; he is thought to have been in early times the *daimon* that haunted a heap of stones (the *Steinmann* or grave-ghost), also the place-spirit of a roadside marker or milestone; as a road

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god, he was the obvious patron of traders and robbers. He was often represented as a rudimentary stock or stone with a human head carved on top and a phallus half-way up. The ancient Hermes-Mercury was the god of eloquence and letters, but the beheaded Gradus-d'Argus has reverted to a rudimentary state of insentient stoniness—he has given up sex too and once tried to castrate himself.

Not only Hermes-Mercury, all the gods of Arcady are glimpsed in *Pale Fire*, transformed, metamorphosed into animal or human shapes. Botkin is identified by Sybil Shade with the botfly, which is a kind of parasitic horsefly that infests sheep and cattle too. Io, in cow form, was tormented by a gadfly, sent by Hera; one of the Vanessa butterflies is the Vanessa Io, marked with peacock eyes. Another of the Vanessids is the Limenitis Sibylla, the White Admiral, and the Red Admiral is the Vanessa Atalanta, which feeds on wounded tree stems, like the scarred hickory in Shade's bosky garden. Atalanta was born in Arcadia. The sibyls are connected with Apollo, and Shade with his laurel trees is an Apollonian figure. Sibyl was born Swallow; the land of Arcady was drained by swallow-holes. The Hyperboreans (read Zemblans) were a northern legendary people sacred to Apollo. Zeus, the sky-king, reigned on Mount Lycaeon in Arcadia with his thunderbolts, and he is heard in the thunderstorms that occur at crucial moments in the Zemblan story—at the arrival of Gradus in America and in Mandevil Forest, on Mount Mandevil, when the king is making his escape; Zeus's thunderbolts, in classical times, were stones too, by which oaths were sworn.

The Arcadian gods of *Pale Fire* are meteoric fugitives, like the deposed Kinbote, fitfully apprehended in a name, a passing allusion. Shade's ornithologist mother was called Caroline Lukin—a triple reference to the Carolina waxwing, to Apollo Lukeios, and to the sacred wood, *lucus* in Latin, full of singing birds. A reference to the Pléiade edition of Proust conjures up the Pleiades, daughters of Atlas, who, fleeing from Orion, were turned into stars and set in the constellation Taurus. One of the seven Pleiades is Electra, "the shining one," born in Arcadia; the word electricity in Greek was the word for amber, which was sent to Delphian Apollo by his Hyperboreans in the north. But the Pleiad was also a group of seven poets who sought to revive tragedy at the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus in Alexandria, one of whom, Lykophron, was the author of a curious riddling poem, like *Pale Fire* one of the hermetic puzzles of its time, called the *Alexandra*—another name for Cassandra, Priam's daughter, who was loved by Apollo.

WITH THE MYRIADS of references to sacred belief there is hardly a glance at Christian myth and legend—a remarkable feat in itself. I have found only two: the oblique allusion to St. Peter as gatekeeper of Heaven and the chess-jesting one to the Black King of the Magi. The book is adamantly classical, magical, and scientific. The author's attitude toward the mystery of the universe is nearer to the old herborist's charmed wonder than to the modern physicist's mystic "faith." His practical morality is not far from Kant's, while his practical pantheism contains Platonic gleams: Kinbote's "phosphorescence" recalls the cave myth, and Shade, in a poem about electricity, discusses metempsychosis, Plato's favourite doctrine. Kinbote concedes in his final remarks that Shade's *Pale Fire*, for all its deficiencies, has "echoes and wavelets of fire and pale phosphorescent hints" of the real Zemblan magic. This madman's concession may also be taken as the author's apologia for his own work, in relation to the fiery Beyond of the pure imagination—Plato's Empyrean, the sphere of pure light or fire. But Plato's Empyrean is finished, a celestial storehouse or vault of models from which the forms of earthly life are copied. In Nabokov's view (see Shade's couplet, "Man's life as commentary to abstruse/Unfinished poem. Note for future use"), the celestial Poem itself is incomplete.

The source of "pale fire" is *Timon of Athens*, Act IV, Scene 3, Timon speaking to the thieves:

> *"...I'll example you with thievery:*
> *The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction*
> *Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,*
> *And her pale fire she snatches from the sun;*
> *The sea's a thief...."*

This idea of natural thievery is bound up with the mirror-theme, for a mirror is held by primitive people to "steal" the image of the man it reflects, and all reflection, including poetic mimesis, can be regarded as a theft from reality, which in turn is always stealing ideas and plagiarising from itself. It is only appropriate that thieving Mercury, "that transcendental tramp," as Kinbote calls Gradus, should be one of the work's principal characters. Botkin, in effect, has stolen Shade's poem. The moon, shining with her borrowed rays, appears in the Luna moth; Io, the cow, was originally a moon goddess, as can be seen from her crescent horns. Shade's Aunt Maud had a verse book kept open at the index ("Moon, Moonrise, Moor, moral"), and Shade's *Webster* is open at *M*. The sky-god Zeus's love-affairs with various moon goddesses —*e.g.*, Europa as well as Io—are adumbrated. Finally, the Red Admiral Vanessa butterfly, which accompanies the poet Shade, like a herald

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of death, to his doom, is often seen, as on that fatal day, at sunset; it has the unusual habit of flying at night, looking for its home, which is often a hollow tree; in other words, the Red Admiral is a butterfly that acts like its nocturnal double, a moth.

PALE FIRE itself circles like a moth, or a moon, around Shakespeare's mighty flame. There are many allusions to Shakespeare's plays, to his biography, to the trees mentioned in Shakespeare, hiding in the lines, and it occurs to me that the treacherous colour green may betray the presence of Shakespeare's enemy, the poet Robert Greene, who described the Bard as an upstart crow dressed in other's feathers; the crow, of course, is a thief. It is also the southernmost constellation, at the other extreme from Zembla.

The pale fire of the title spreads beyond its original Shakespearean source and beacons toward a number of odd corners. In the commentary there is an account of the poet burning his rejected drafts in "the pale fire of the incinerator." An amusing sidelight is provided by the word ingle, used by Kinbote to mean a catamite or boy favourite, but which also means blaze, from the Gaelic word for fire. Helena Rubinstein has a lipstick and nail polish named "Pale Fire." I think too of the pale fire of opals and of Shelley, whose "incandescent soul" is mentioned in Shade's poem:

> *Life like a dome of many-coloured glass*
> *Stains the white radiance of eternity.*

Whether the visible world, for Nabokov, is a prismatic reflection of eternity or the other way around is a central question that begs itself but that remains, for that very reason, moot and troubling. In the game of signalling back and forth with mirrors, which may be man's relation with the cosmos, there is perhaps no before or after, first or second, only distance—separation—and across it, the agitated flashing of the semaphore.

IN ANY CASE, this centaur-work of Nabokov's, half-poem, half-prose, this merman of the deep, is a creation of perfect beauty, symmetry, strangeness, originality, and moral truth. Pretending to be a curio, it cannot disguise the fact that it is one of the very great works of art of this century, the modern novel that everyone thought was dead and that was only playing possum.

Strachey's Cry

The Strangled Cry. By JOHN STRACHEY. *Bodley Head*, 21s.

I AM NEITHER old enough nor young enough to write an objective review of this book. The experiences and reactions of any English-born middle-class intellectual of my generation are so similar to Mr. Strachey's that, as I read, I keep stopping to engage in an imaginary dialogue with the author; instead of assessing his book, I find myself trying to rewrite it.

The earliest in date of the articles in this collection are four pieces of reportage about his experiences during the war, as a Warden during the London Blitz, as a passenger on a troop-ship which is torpedoed but manages to limp to port, and as an observer on a bomber sent out to lay mines in the ocean. These, for their clarity and vividness—the reader forgets the narrator because he becomes him—would be remarkable whoever had written them, but one is doubly impressed when one recalls that the author is by profession, not a novelist, but a politician and political philosopher. Primarily concerned as he must be with people in the mass and general ideas, the occupational vice of the politician is a blindness or indifference to the single person and the minor historical detail. It is astounding and heartening to find one who can so successfully switch from the macroscopic to the microscopic view. A politician with the humility to say:

> We don't understand much of what's happening to us, even when it's happening. We simply don't get it. The Man in the modern world, the blind bomber in cloud, the blunt-nosed fish moving through the opaque waters. None of us gets it. No one knows what it's all about....

can be assured of my vote.

Of the pieces in the section entitled *People*, one of them (*John Kenneth Galbraith*) is not really about the man but a review of his book, *The Affluent Society*, and properly belongs among the books discussed in the first section. Of the others, the most interesting, to me at least, are those on Rathenau and Schacht. Mr. Strachey considers it just possible that, had he not been assassinated, Rathenau, whose "immense business experience and splendid mind allowed him to see the mechanics of the economy almost perfectly" and "understood excellently what ought to be done to make the last stage of German capitalism work by progressively modifying its nature," might have enabled the Weimar Republic to meet the shock of the Depression without foundering. As it was, few regretted his death. The German nationalists hated him as an internationally-minded Jewish intellectual, and the German trade union leaders

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feared him as a big industrialist who spoke of Socialism with patronising contempt. (For the failure of Rathenau and German Labour to come to an understanding, some of the blame was due to Labour.) Rathenau's defect, which cost him his life, was that he had no understanding of the art of political persuasion; as an intellectual, he probably thought it vulgar. (Even if he did, as Mr. Strachey claims, have a hero-worship for the blond Aryan, I cannot see that it influenced his political ideas.) The professional politicians who succeeded him, on the other hand, had no understanding of economics and pursued a deflationary policy "exactly calculated to intensify to the uttermost degree the catastrophic consequences of the world slump...." In view of the appalling crimes committed by the Nazis, the fact that Hitler came to power with at least the consent of the majority of Germans and, by 1935, had won their enthusiastic support, tempts us to think of them as a people who must be wicked by nature. It is salutary, therefore, to be reminded by Mr. Strachey that the criminals restored to them jobs, wages, and security, when the decent democrats "had left them to starve and rot." He considers that the economic success of the Nazis was due almost entirely to their willingness to follow the advice of Dr. Schacht. Schacht was not a very nice man, maybe, but to say "The stain which will for ever discolour his name is that he put his vast abilities at the service of the Nazis" seems to me too glib a condemnation. Few people in history have found themselves in his position of being the only man, apparently, who knows what economic measures to take in order to save his country from ruin. Suppose I were such a man. The government in power refuses to listen to me and the chaos grows daily worse. A party, led by persons whom I know to be crooks, seizes power and asks me to take charge of the economy for them. What ought my answer to be? If I say No, I condemn my fellow-countrymen to go on starving: if I say Yes, I shall, however unwillingly, become an accomplice in whatever crimes the crooks commit. Frankly, I do not know the answer. No doubt Schacht, who, whatever his faults, was neither a Nazi nor a warmonger, told himself, like many Germans more decent than he, that the Nazi leaders were too insane to last long and would soon be overthrown, probably by the Army, and replaced by a respectable régime. I hesitate to damn him utterly for having guessed wrong. Again I am a little surprised, when he is describing the war-time use of slave labour by I. G. Farben, that a thinker as clear-headed and just as Mr. Strachey should write:

> Such is the end towards which latter-day capitalism, in a dictatorial environment and bereft of all democratic countervailing forces, inevitably drives.

Why capitalism? Why inevitably? Under Stalin, Communist Russia had just as many slaves and treated them no better. Any tyranny, whatever its ideology, has and will do such things, not inevitably, but if it should happen to be profitable and the moral climate (even dictators can have consciences) should permit it.

THE MOST IMPORTANT section of the book is, of course, the first from which it takes its title. In this Mr. Strachey examines four examples of what he calls the literature of reaction, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, Chambers' *Witness*, and Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*.

The Central European and the American had been for many years active members of the Communist Party, the Englishman was an independent radical who had been badly wounded in the Spanish Civil War; and their books are the outcome of their disillusionment with Communism when they discovered what its theories led to in practice. In Orwell's case, I'm sorry Mr. Strachey did not select *Homage to Catalonia* instead of *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*; artistically, it is the better book, I believe, and, since it is a

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direct reportage of how the Communists in Spain actually behaved—to have written and published it when he did was an act of singular moral courage—it cannot be explained away, as an imaginary future world always can, as the product of the author's private neurasthenia. Pasternak's position is quite different. Though he certainly welcomed the Revolution and wanted it to succeed, he was never at any time active politically, but he, alone of the four, had first-hand experience, extending over three-and-a-half decades of Communism in its home country.

As their critic, Mr. Strachey has the authority, which most of us lack, of having been all his adult life a practising politician who knows from the inside how policy is made and carried out. He begins by telling us that, in calling these four books reactionary, he does not mean anything pejorative but, on balance, his verdict is, I think, adverse. He feels that they condemn, not merely Marxist or totalitarian politics, but all political activity as such, and by implication, therefore, impugn his own honesty and integrity. How much truth is there in this? Obviously none of them was a madman who fancied that social life in a modern society would be possible without a government of some kind, or that there is no difference between being governed by men like Mr. Strachey and men like Himmler, nor, if they were alive, would any of them, I believe, not even Chambers, vote for the extreme Right. On the other hand, all of them regard two beliefs as the deadly enemies of civilisation, the Marxist belief that politics can be a science, and a much older belief, first formulated by Plato, and really inconsistent with the first, that the politician is a kind of artist who moulds society into a good shape as the potter moulds clay. Now, I am convinced that Mr. Strachey does not really hold either of these beliefs, but, occasionally he uses language which would suggest to anyone who knew nothing about his career that he did. Politics cannot be a science because, in politics, theory and practice cannot be separated, and the sciences depend upon their separation. The scientist frames a hypothesis and devises an experiment to test it; if the experiment gives a negative result, he knows his hypothesis was wrong and that, however reluctantly, he must abandon it. Only when experiment has confirmed his hypothesis will he begin to consider any practical applications. He can afford to wait for the truth. Since the actual subjects of his experiments have no will of their own, he does not have to take any subjective factor into consideration. The situation of the politician is utterly different. He cannot try out a hypothesis under laboratory conditions, but must immediately apply it to a historical situation and upon human beings who not only have wills and opinions of their own but can also change them. Consequently, no result at any moment can prove beyond doubt that he is mistaken. I hold the theory, let us say, that farmers will be happier and food production increased if agriculture is collectivised. I collectivise it. The farmers are obviously rebellious and food production drops. Does this prove me mistaken? Not necessarily. I can always argue that the failure is due to the malice and stupidity of the farmers and that if I continue with the experiment long enough I shall be proved right. Empirical politics must be kept in bounds by democratic institutions which leave it up to the subjects of the experiment to say whether it shall be tried and to stop if they dislike it because, in politics, there is a distinction, unknown in science, between Truth and Justice. Certain ideas of the Labour Party, for example, may have been true in 1929, but they did not become just until 1945.

The Platonic notion of the politician as a kind of artist has even more disastrous consequences. The poet, painter, or musician works with inanimate material and is totally responsible for the result; every decision, every act is his. The politician who thinks of his activity as analogous must inevitably end up believing that every aspect of human life is a political matter and his concern.

It is against the intrusion of politicians upon matters which are not properly their concern, surely, that Pasternak's polemic is directed. He asserts that in the lives of nearly all human beings, their personal relations, with their lovers, their wives and husbands, their children, their friends, are of immense importance, and that such relations are pre-political. He also asserts that, for those who are fortunate enough to discover a vocation, fidelity to it is also of supreme importance. His hero happens to be a poet, but he could equally well have been a biochemist or a pigeon fancier. In other words, most human beings, including many of the most gifted, are not professional politicians, which is just as well for the latter because, if politics were the primary concern of all, government would be impossible. If Pasternak is "anti-political," it is only because, in the particular society in which he lived, it was the politician who demanded the final word on every subject. Other kinds of professionals have and will make this claim. In 13th-century Europe it was the theologian; in the United States at the moment it may be the consultant psychologist to the Public Relations industry.

Mr. Strachey's second charge against these books is that they represent a reaction "against five hundred years of rationalism and empiri-

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cism; against, in short, the enlightenment." He feels they are dangerously close to those—I wish he had named them—

> who point to the mysteries in order to dissuade us from even attempting to apply reason to society . . . those who have deserted, whether they know it or intend it, and whether their inner motive be weariness, class-prejudice, or simply despair, to the enemies of civilised life.

Again, while I know that Mr. Strachey is not a naïve 19th-century materialist of the Helmholz type, his language is occasionally curiously old-fashioned. He assumes that Christians believe in "the supernatural." Whom has he asked? I have never myself met a Christian who would say that he did. He would say, of course, and most respectable modern scientists would agree with him, that the knowledge of Nature acquirable by the sciences is not exhaustive, that there are important experiences which are comprehensible enough but only to another kind of knowing.

> Is it not possible to conceive of a science which re-embraced, as did the science of the ancient world, at its own level of complexity, everything that we to-day think of as "not science"? If so, it would no doubt, become our æsthetic, our ethic, our religion.

Has Mr. Strachey showed this sentence to a professional scientist? The "science" of the ancient world failed to get very far precisely because it was a hodge-podge of empirical observations, poetry, and theology; science only began to have its triumphs when it abandoned the ambition to embrace everything and limited itself to certain kinds of fact and certain methodological procedures. Far from tending towards a unity, it has continued to split up more and more into different sciences.

Mr. Strachey is, of course, absolutely right when he says it is high time people of his and my generation gave up wringing their hands over how cruelly Communism deceived them, and turned their attention to the actual social-political problems which now confront England and the United States, some of the most pressing of which are described in Professor Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*. How, for instance, are we to escape from the madness of consumption for consumption's sake which modern technology seems to impose upon us and which, within a few years, may become a problem for Russia too? The Russians may be immune to the American obsession with personal enrichment, but they show every sign of sharing our materialism and our idolatry of production. One political danger in the States—I cannot speak for Great Britain—is the

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opposite of Russia's; our professional politicians, our Senators and Congressmen, have too little power. It is very difficult for the average citizen in the States not to become politically apathetic because one has the feeling that the people or groups of people with the real power to decide policy cannot be influenced by one's vote. One does not even know their names.

The Senate and Congress make me think of McCarthy and another little bone I have to pick with Mr. Strachey and many English labour-liberals when they write about the brief era of that unappetising fellow. Discreditable as it was, I know, having lived through it, that we did not feel we were living under a reign of terror. The atmosphere in Washington was, indeed, deplorable, and in certain limited sectors, cases of gross injustice occurred, but almost without exception the Universities refused to be cowed, and I never met one person during that period who was afraid to say what he thought about anything. To say that McCarthy "did enormous damage to the vigour, freedom, and boldness of American thought and culture" is nonsense. On the other hand, I am sorry to say that what depressed me most at the time was the behaviour of many self-styled liberals. To begin with, their refusal to look at the Hiss case objectively, their willingness to repeat and invent any vileness about Chambers was revolting. For those who, when subpœnaed to testify before Congressional Committees, admitted that they had been Communists but then risked being sent to prison for contempt by refusing to name others, I have the greatest admiration. But I have no sympathy whatsoever with those—and they were the majority—who, taking refuge behind the Fifth Amendment, refused to say what they had been. The general public concluded from their refusal, probably rightly, that they had been Communists; it also concluded, which was certainly false but exactly what McCarthy wanted us to believe, that anyone who had been a Communist or even a fellow-traveller had been engaged in a criminal conspiracy.

If I have spent so much time raising picayune points, it is partly Mr. Strachey's fault for writing a book which I so much enjoyed reading. The matter is so interesting and it was obviously written by such a nice man.

P.S.—A political parable. What finally sank McCarthy with the American public was television. Those who watch serials know that the hero is "clean-cut," preferably blond, and that the villain has a heavy beard. When they saw McCarthy and the representatives of the Army on the screen together, they immediately knew what was what.

W. H. Auden

That Teenage Thing

Young Germany. 1900-1960. A History of the German Youth Movement. By Walter Z. Laqueur. Introduction by R. H. S. Crossman, M.P. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, 35s.

Any young man who had friends of his own age in Germany between the wars might have noticed that many of them shared certain common qualities which could not be attributed to the mere fact that they were all Germans, because their parents had none of them. It would be difficult to define precisely what they were, because they did not go with any particular beliefs or opinions, and indeed were compatible with the most conflicting ones; they were a matter of style and attitude, a directness and frankness of speech and manner, a kind of rough-and-ready intimacy in their personal relations, a shared contempt for the world of their elders.

This particular personal style was very largely a heritage, direct or indirect, from the German youth movement, and it was so persuasive that it was shared by thousands who never had any part in the movement itself. It was like an air they had all breathed, a song they had all sung, and by its influence it helped to shape the dramatic and disastrous course of German history during this century.

It is remarkable, therefore, that until now there has been no comprehensive history of the youth movement, either in German or any other language, and this makes one all the more grateful to Mr. Laqueur for his profoundly interesting book; though even if the movement had found many other historians, it is doubtful if it could ever have had a better one. Mr. Laqueur's achievement is all the more remarkable because what he is really writing about is a shared personal experience, the experience of youth itself, which is almost impossible to reduce to words; in English the difficulty is even greater, because most of the words available are German ones which are almost untranslatable. What English equivalents are there for *völkisch, nationalgesinnt, Bund, Gemeinschaft,* especially when the words are used with overtones derived from such heterogeneous sources as Stefan George and "White Fox," the pseudonym of John Hargrave, of King's Langley in Hertfordshire, author of *Kibbo Kift, the Woodcraft Kindred*? One can only say that Mr. Laqueur has triumphantly surmounted such difficulties, and by the application of a cool and sceptical intelligence has succeeded in reducing the elusive and indefinable *mystique* of the youth movement to a rational pattern of events.

It is as well, however, to understand precisely

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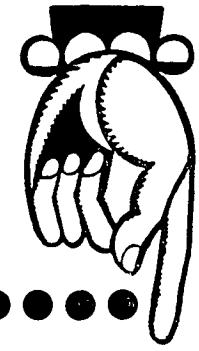
what Mr. Laqueur is writing about. He is not interested in the numerically very much larger youth organisations created by the churches, the political parties or patriotic associations, nor is he interested in the Boy Scouts, or again, except indirectly, in the *Hitlerjugend*. For these after all were the creation of adults, who were less interested in the young for their own sakes than in the men and women whom they wanted them one day to become. Mr. Laqueur's subject is the free and autonomous movement which, as Mr. Crossman says in his excellent introduction, was a unique German phenomenon, "a movement *of* youth, *by* youth, and *for* youth."

The membership of the autonomous youth movement at no time exceeded 60,000; its typical organisation unit was the small self-constituted group, under its own chosen leader, of eight to twelve members aged between twelve and nineteen. Above the group came the local branch, the *Ortsgruppe*, then the provincial association, the *Gau*, with 200–1,000 members and finally, at the head, the *Bund*, with a membership which might vary from 2,000 to 3,500. The movement as a whole was composed of the mutually independent *Bünde*; and as the members of the basic groups, and their chosen leaders, were continually changing, and as each *Bund* had its own particular spiritual and emotional orientation, the movement presented a bewildering kaleidoscope of beliefs, policies, practices and attitudes, depending largely on the personality of the leaders, who were chosen for the charismatic qualities, of the groups and the *Bünde*.

What gave the movement a kind of unity, to which it never succeeded in giving an organisational form, was, firstly, the belief that it is possible for the young to create for themselves a world of their own, isolated from and opposed to the world of their elders; and, secondly, its social structure, for though in principle based solely on youth, it was almost exclusively confined to the children of the middle classes, was predominantly Protestant and flourished only in the large towns. Indeed, in its essence, the movement was largely a revolt of the young against the values of a middle-class industrial civilisation.

In this revolt intellect played little part, and this in itself only increased its confusion and incoherence; it was a romantic revolt and therefore tended to be reactionary, because in Germany romanticism and reaction go hand in hand. It was romantic also because its strongest inspirations came from the deep sense of community with each other which its members enjoyed, and to experience it one had to tread the "inner way," *den Weg nach Innen*, which sometimes led one over very treacherous ground;



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but this only increased its appeal to the young who wished to break away from the banality, the conventions, the totems and taboos of adult society. How well Stefan George expressed this feeling:

Geht ein weg noch hinter den weidenstümpfen
Wo die halme sich vor dem wetter ducken?
Führt dieser fluss dich nicht fort zu den giftigen sümpfen
Wo die grünlichen lichter zusammenzucken?

In its origins, however, the movement was free of such seductive sophistication, for it began simply as a collection of rambling clubs, of which the first, *Wandervogel, Ausschuss für Schülerfahrten,* was founded in 1901 in a back room in the prosperous Berlin suburb of Steglitz. Their object was to provide the young with some form of release from the intolerably oppressive weight of bourgeois society in the age of Wilhelm II; they constituted, says Mr. Laqueur, "an unpolitical form of opposition to a civilisation that had little to offer the younger generation, a protest against its lack of vitality, warmth and ideas." It seems odd to-day, in the age of the espresso bar, to think that such a protest could take the form of modest weekend excursions in the vicinity of Berlin, but gradually they extended further afield until *Wandervögel* might be found in Lapland and North Africa, and in the course of their wanderings they obtained an almost mystical experience of the "togetherness" of youth.

By 1913 the seed of Steglitz had propagated itself so successfully that on the 11th of October, the centenary of the war of liberation against Napoleon, it was possible to hold the first great convention of the youth movement on the Hohe Meissner, a mountain south of Kassel. It was attended by 3,000 representatives of the youth groups, some of which had already departed pretty drastically from the simple principles of Steglitz, while some had given the movement a taint of homosexuality which was a cause of scandal to a society which had been profoundly shocked by the sexual deviations of Prince Eulenburg and Krupp.

Despite such vagaries, these early years of the youth movement had a kind of innocence and charm which properly belongs to youth. The *Wandervögel* took as their ideal the wandering scholars of the Middle Ages, and tried to imitate their way of life by learning to know and love their country as they wandered among its forests and mountains and lakes, singing by their camp fires to the music of the guitar the folk songs they so lovingly collected in their famous song book, the *Zupfgeigenhansl*; it is worth remembering, to their credit, that the spirit which animated them, romantic, unpolitical and anti-social, was one which made Hitler always use *Wandervögel* as a term of abuse and contempt.

For many young Germans this was a kind of springtime which matched their own youth. Both were short lived; they were drowned in blood at Langemark and other battlefields of the first World War. Of the 14,000 *Wandervögel* who served in the war, 3,500 were killed; those who returned found a Germany in which the society against which they had protested had been shattered by far more terrible blows than they could deliver. And they found a new generation of youth into whom had entered something of the sourness, the bitterness and the nihilism engendered by defeat. Their ideal was no longer the wandering scholar; his place was taken by the *Landsknecht*, the mercenary soldier of the Hundred Years War, owing allegiance to no one, and free because he fought for love not of country or anything else but of fighting for its own sake, in the spirit learnt by Ernst Jünger in the *Stosstrupps* of the war, or by Ernst von Salomon in the *Freikorps*. And while the *Wandervögel* had protested against a society which was both middle class and reactionary, all youth could now find to protest against was the despised *"System,"* that is, the liberal, democratic, and progressive régime of Weimar. For if youth alone is made a justification, indeed a necessity, for a revolt against society, it will revolt as enthusiastically against a good one as an evil one.

It corresponded to the new spirit that the typical unit of the youth movement now became, not the small *Gruppe* or *Horde*, but the nationally organised *Bund*, often tainted by militarism and deeply infected by anti-Semitism. The post-war history of the youth movement is the history of the *Bünde*, with names like *Adler und Falken, Freischar Schill, Wandervogel völkisher Bund, Grossdeutscher Jugendbund,* or the *"D.J.1.11"* of the eccentric Tusk, which was more like a secret society than a youth organisation. Not all the *Bünde* were right-wing or reactionary: some leaned towards Communism, some towards National Bolshevism, some tried to adhere to the strictly non-political doctrine on which the movement had been founded. But as social and economic conditions deteriorated in Germany, the *Bünde* became increasingly extremist, and political differences increasingly difficult to suppress or to bridge; even so, they still clung to the illusion that the common element of youth still provided a bond of unity between them, that they still constituted a movement and not a shattered mirror of the disastrous events which, indifferent to their existence, were taking place in the adult world.

They continued to believe this to the very

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end and even in 1933 tried to find, without success, a basis of unity on which to oppose Hitler; but when at last the moment of *Gleichschaltung* came, many of their leaders managed to convince themselves that absorption into the *Hitlerjugend* was compatible with their ideals. For was not the *Hitlerjugend* itself a youth movement, and was not absorption simply a process by which the *Bünde* would merge with, and perhaps give a lead to, an organisation which would unite the whole of German youth, as the *Bünde* had failed to do? This of course was self-deception, which was a very fashionable practice in Germany in those days. The *Hitlerjugend* had nothing in common with aspirations of the *Bünde*; as a voluntary organisation, before 1933, it had conspicuously failed to capture German youth for Hitler, and after 1933 it was simply an instrument for conscripting the young into the service of National Socialism.

The truth is of course that, confronted with so brutal and ruthless a power as National Socialism, the *Bünde* found they had neither the material nor the spiritual means of resisting it; it was rather as if a band of C.N.D. demonstrators had found the road from Aldermaston barred by the thugs of the O.A.S., and make-believe had given way to a terrifying reality. The confrontation quickly shattered the illusion that youth forms a self-subsistent world of its own. Almost overnight *Wandervögeln* became *Märzhaasen*, though some individuals still clung to their ideals and in the Third Reich evidence of their influence would continue to be found in the most unlikely places. The brothers Scholl who were executed in Munich in 1943 had been profoundly influenced by the *Jungenschaft*; when the *Bamberger Reiter*, Claus von Stauffenberg, was shot on July 20th, 1944, he was wearing a ring engraved with the words, *Finis initium*, the title of a famous poem by Stefan George.

Mr. Laqueur tells this sad story in fascinating detail, yet without ever losing himself in the shifting and bewildering complexities of youth movement politics. Nor does he try to pass judgment on the youth movement; he is content to analyse its weaknesses and to record what may be regarded as its most lasting achievements, as, for instance, its permanent influence on German education or its work for the preservation of German folk song. Yet at the end of his story, one finds oneself irresistibly tempted to ask what lessons, if any, may be drawn from it, and what light, if any, it may throw on what

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may be called the youth movement, the "teenage thing," of to-day. For who can doubt that, however differently they may manifest themselves, the instincts, impulses and attitudes which inspire many of the young to-day are the same as those which animated the German youth movement, that new Beatnik is but old *Wandervögel* writ large; or who could wish that the young of to-day, if faced with a crisis of the same terrible proportions as faced the *Bünde*, should share their pathetic helplessness?

If there is a single answer to the many questions which Mr. Laqueur's book provokes, it is probably that any attempt by the young to isolate themselves in a world or community of their own must inevitably fail. In following Mr. Laqueur's history one is, for instance, continually impressed by how closely the movement reflected events in the adult world against which it was a protest. Yet since this happened involuntarily, indeed against its will, the movement was never in a position either to control or even to understand them; of the children who formed the movement it could truly be said that they saw events as in a glass darkly, but never face to face.

For the truth is, of course, that the young cannot contract out of society, any more than anyone else can, except by a form of make-believe which makes them even more defenceless against its pressures, and much of the German youth movement was indeed make-believe, a world of Kibbo Kift. Partly no doubt this was because the youth movement, like any autonomous society of the young, whether it meets round camp fires or in espresso bars, was faced by the fundamental difficulty that the experience of youth is essentially an individual one, and in every case different. In becoming a movement, a community, a group, it loses something of its own nature, and merely reproduces precisely those elements in adult society against which it most wishes to protest; youth becomes an age group.

This indeed seems to be what happened in the German youth movement; the mere fact and experience of being young provided its members with no common principles or doctrines, and they were forced to look outside themselves for them, that is to say, to the world of the adult, and very often they took only the worst of what that world had to offer.

Most of all, after reading Mr. Laqueur, one wonders whether the weaknesses and errors of the youth movement were not in fact the result, strangely enough, of a profound misconception of what youth really means. For youth is essentially double-sighted; it looks both within, into the dark, obscure, self-sufficient world of the adolescent, and outwards and forwards to the man he will soon become. This double vision belongs to the very essence of youth, and hence no doubt its peculiar quality of dark and troubled confusion. To eliminate either source of vision, as the German youth movement did, to concentrate on those aspects of youth which exclude the adult and to suppress those others which foreshadow him, is to deprive the young precisely of what is most precious in them; their ferocious half-formed individuality, nurtured so often, as we see it in Rimbaud, in ecstasy, shame and solitude, degenerates into the stock gestures of protest of the teenager. What began as a revolt against convention itself becomes a convention.

In the German youth movement the convention was reduced to the most grotesque of parodies when the children of the *Wandervögeln* found themselves singing the song of the *Hitlerjugend*:

> *Wir werden weiter marschieren, wenn alles in Scherben fällt,*
> *Denn heute gehört uns Deutschland, und morgen die ganze Welt....*

As Mr. Laqueur drily reminds us, this was not genuine nihilism but only a hollow bravado; when the world did collapse in ruins and flames around them, the *Hitlerjugend* did not rejoice at the spectacle and were only too glad to give up marching. The *Wandervögel* did not rise like a Phoenix from the ruins of the Third Reich, and only awaited the opportunity to become the most earnest and industrious of *Wirtschaftswunderkinder*. It is a sign of Mr. Laqueur's sobriety and good sense that he should regard this as an improvement on what had gone before.

Goronwy Rees

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LETTERS

Crossman and TV

MR. CROSSMAN, in his article on television [ENCOUNTER, August], easily disposes of the false analogy between television and the press. He then replaces it by another false analogy: between the "viewing public" and other audiences, which he lists as including "the theatre-goer, the cinema-goer, the art lover, the sports fan, the reading public."

I doubt if the word "audience" is rightly applied to people who read books or who visit an art gallery on successive days. Of the others, however, the first essential characteristic is that they are gathered together. A theatre audience or a football crowd is more than the sum of its parts; the excitement, the laughter, or the disappointment of individuals becomes the atmosphere dominating a group, and therefore is more strongly felt by the individuals themselves. The important thing about television viewers, as Mr. Crossman says, is that they are split up into small units. From this he draws, like many other writers on the subject, the conclusion that television is "the most powerful medium of communication ever invented." The deduction I make is that it is a good deal less powerful than its predecessors, whether in the communication of art or in political persuasion. Fidel Castro talks on television quite often, but when he wants to put over a major policy or mobilise a national mood he gets people into a packed square in Havana. Again: by common consent the Labour Party's television programmes in the 1959 election were much better than those of the Tories, but Labour lost the election.

The audiences listed by Mr. Crossman—all of them, this time—have a yet more decisive characteristic. They look, listen, or read with sustained concentration. Perhaps because his only spell of regular viewing was in hospital, Mr. Crossman seems to have no idea how many of the "viewing public" (people who are in the same room as a set that has been switched on) are at any given moment eating, drinking, engaging in desultory conversation, knitting, doing the household accounts, making model aeroplanes, solving crossword puzzles, dozing, or necking. They will always be so engaged, though of course not in the same numbers or proportions, whether the programme is *Monitor* or *Coronation Street*. Watching television is not a chosen interruption to domestic life, like going to a play or a football match; it is an accompaniment to domestic life.

True, Mr. Crossman defends the right to watch trivial programmes in this fashion. But he also demands a channel for programmes that would require concentration. How does he envisage the scene in the ordinary home, with only one living-room, when the set is switched to this channel? Is father forbidden to repair the alarm-clock, or mother to hand round tea and biscuits?

The dreadful truth from which Mr. Crossman averts his gaze, though not quite with such revulsion as Mr. Richard Hoggart, is that television is intrinsically a trivial, because an ancillary thing. This is not at all to say that it is wrong or debasing or shouldn't be allowed: simply that intellectuals should stop making so much fuss about it, and in particular stop alternately hailing and denouncing the immense influence that in reality it does not have. I end this letter without airing my views on the recommendations of the Pilkington Commission, and I have indeed no views that I am strongly moved to urge, because to me the extraordinary thing is that there should have been a Royal Commission on television at all. I suppose we shall have a Royal Commission on crossword puzzles next.

MERVYN JONES

London

Hiroshima and After

G. F. HUDSON's notations in and around my book, *Japan Subdued*, have left certain perplexing questions in my mind which perhaps he, or your readers, can clear up.

One: why does not he, and various other English commentators, give me the benefit of some small margin of doubt, of hesitation, before passing sentence? He explains those opinions which are not to his liking as primarily "due to an anxious wish to sustain what may be regarded as the official American thesis on the atomic bombing." Did it not occur to him that I may have reached such conclusions as are ventured in the book primarily because they seemed to be the correct ones after study and reflection on all the facts and circumstances? In this connection I should perhaps make known that no American official, in office or out, tried to influence my views; that my opportunity to use official records was unconditional—subject only to military security clearance of notes on these records; and that no one in the Government saw the text before its appearance in print.

Is the book being used to beat some dog? If so, he may be able to identify the dog.

In the same way I think that the able members of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey will be offended by Mr. Hudson's insinuation that their conclusion quoted in my book was influenced by their wish to please the Strategic Air Force, rather than based on impartial examination of the evidence.

Two: why did he not, nor any of the other English commentators, mention the fact that the British authorities, former Prime Minister Churchill and his civilian, military, and scientific advisers, all concurred in the decision regarding the use of the bomb; and that subsequently former Prime Minister Attlee wrote that he would have done so also?

Three: why, in similar fashion, does he seem to dismiss as of little importance the probability that far more Japanese lives were saved than were lost as a result of the use of the bomb?

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Four: why does he not mention that I stress the belief that the Japanese should have been informed of the nature of the new weapon after its test in New Mexico, and before its use—probably in the Potsdam Declaration?

It is also to be regretted that Mr. Hudson did not think he need give his authority for his statement that "the Japanese had four-and-a-half times as many *kamikaze* planes as the American staff planners supposed." No memo or historical study that I have read or heard of conforms to or confirms this assertion. I believe, on the contrary, that the accepted American intelligence estimates of *kamikaze* strength may have been excessive.

HERBERT FEIS

York, Maine,
U.S.A.

I am sorry if my review seemed to suggest that Mr. Feis was under any kind of official pressure in writing his book. He does seem to me, however, to take up too uncritical an attitude towards official reports and assessments. I entirely agree with Mr. Feis that by ending the war the bomb averted the further slaughter that would otherwise have taken place; where we disagree is that he is quite sure that Japan would have been driven to unconditional surrender in any case, whether the bomb had been used or not, whereas I regard this as doubtful. I am quite ready to acknowledge the British endorsement of the use of the bomb; if I did not mention it, it was not to absolve Britain of any responsibility in the matter, but because it was not relevant to the point I was making in the review. With regard to the figure for *kamikaze* planes, the source is Professor S. E. Morison (*Atlantic Monthly*, October 1960).

G. F. HUDSON

St. Antony's College,
Oxford

"Pressure Politics"

IAN WALLER, in his article "Pressure Politics" [ENCOUNTER, August], refers to my position with the Police Federation and says that he sees nothing to criticise in the arrangement. Nevertheless, he completely misunderstands my relationship with the Federation, which is not parliamentary, but industrial. My agreement with the Police Federation says:

> Nothing in this Agreement shall impose, nor is it intended to impose, any restriction upon or direction to the Consultant in relation to his parliamentary activities and the Consultant shall be at liberty to act in his capacity as a Member of Parliament in such manner as he thinks fit and proper.

The Police Federation were very ready to include such a Clause in the Agreement because my major activity is as a member of the Staff Side team on the Police Council, negotiating wages and conditions for the Police Service.

I was approached by the Police Federation shortly after the Police Council was set up in 1954 as a body which, for the first time in the history of the Police Service, gave them the opportunity to negotiate, jointly with the employers, about their conditions of service. Because the Staff Side of the Police Council felt they were being outgunned by the greater expertness of the employers, they asked me to help in the negotiations. The reason they came to me is that I had previously served on the Staff Side of the Civil Service National Whitley Council and have written about the techniques of negotiation.

Any parliamentary activities on behalf of the Police Service are entirely subsidiary and are mainly concerned with ensuring that agreements reached on the Police Council are properly enshrined in the Statutory Regulations which the Home Office has to lay before Parliament.

So even though Mr. Waller made clear he had no criticism to offer, I find it very unflattering to be included in his article. I wish he had asked me about my position before he wrote it.

JAMES CALLAGHAN

House of Commons

Dennis and Hanging

MR. NIGEL DENNIS's pathetic essay confirms my worst suspicions concerning the opposition to capital punishment. Most patently, its emotional pose, with the transparent suggestions that "others" suffer even more than the author and his wife, is either contrived or pathological. It simply is not common or normal for men to seek out "hanging days" and live morbidly through them until the trap is sprung, the axe falls, or the gas is released, any more than it is for men to seek out the statistical averages for suicides and await with anxiety their fulfilment. Men do take interest in the announced death tolls on holiday week-ends and express, perhaps even feel, a certain "shock" as the record passes the prediction. But surely these are not normal men and we would not want to give them moral credit for either the concern or the reaction.

The main shortcoming of the essay is apropos of the major point: that capital punishment does not produce the positive moral effect commonly claimed for it, since the moral awareness it produces is, although acute, essentially morbid. The fault here lies in the assumption that the moral awareness which punishment ought to produce is merely a feeling or sentiment—a "feeling better," a "being buoyed up," or "encouraged." This simply misses the point of the theory of punishment criticised, *viz.*, that punishment in any case serves the moral and social as an essential expression of the meaning of the action punished; that punishment is a form of language; and that the question is not whether any particular form of punishment is in itself morally right or wrong, but whether it is or is not

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Moscow

LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, *the organ of the Writers' Union, declared: "There is no branch of our economy with so much fortuitousness, disorganisation, lack of planning, chaos and stupidity as the book-publishing business." Russians claim they publish more books than any other country. However, it is now admitted that very large numbers, worth "hundreds of millions of new roubles," remain unsold. This is partly due to duplication and the fact that the selection of titles bears little relation to the demand.... It is most laudable to encourage agricultural progress, the paper points out. But it says the actual result is an avalanche of very similar books.*

The encouragement of poultry-breeding saw the publication of 255 Eggs from a Hen, 216 Eggs from a Hen, To Obtain 166 Eggs from a Hen, 165 Eggs from Every Hen, *etc. The paper states that 122 different books on the subject were published simultaneously in different parts of the country.*

THE TIMES

Los Angeles

UNDER *California's new law prohibiting the sale of material considered obscene, a Hollywood bookseller, Bradley J. Smith, was convicted of selling "Tropic of Cancer," the novel by Henry Miller. According to the Dean of the School of Library Service of the University of California, Mr. Miller is more read throughout the world than any American living, apart from Upton Sinclair, or any dead, except Mark Twain and Jack London.... Miller apparently was reluctant to have "Tropic of Cancer" published in the United States; he is on record as saying that all the people whose opinion he cares about have read the book.*

THE TIMES

London

I WAS *invited to Washington [writes Prof. A. J. Ayer, of Oxford] to talk to a study group which has been described as the "White House University." The President was not there, but most of the members of his Cabinet were, together with their wives. Imagine the present British Cabinet and their wives inviting a philosopher to lecture to them!*

DAILY HERALD

New York

MR. ADZUBHEI, *editor of* Izvestia, *said to-day in an interview that his father-in-law, Mr. Khrushchev, "likes to read and memorise poetry. That is where he gets a lot of the folk proverbs for which he is so famous."*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Düsseldorf

I TOOK [*writes Harold Pinter*], *as is the Continental custom, a bow with a German cast of* The Caretaker *at the end of the play on the first night. I was at once booed violently by what must have been the finest collection of booers in the world. I thought they were using megaphones, but it was pure mouth. The cast, though, were as dogged as the audience and we took thirty-four curtain calls, all to boos. By the thirty-fourth there were only two people left in the house, still booing.*

SUNDAY TIMES

London

NUMBER *3 of* Sixth Form Opinion *carries the results of polling nearly 5,000 pupils from 76 schools on what they read. There is one surprising omission from the list of most popular authors. We are told that 74 per cent have read H. G. Wells, 25 per cent Aldous Huxley, and 17 per cent Evelyn Waugh. Camus, Beckett, Kafka, and Proust all appear, though the percentages are smaller. But no percentage at all is accorded to D. H. Lawrence. This is most odd. Can it be that Sir Allen Lane fought his battle for nothing?*

TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

Milwaukee

THE PHRASE, *"the Ugly American," which was the title of a novel published three years ago, has come to stand for incompetency in American foreign embassies, for a boorish, bungling, foreign service officer or diplomat. Ironically, the "ugly American" in the novel was not that at all. He literally was ugly; his facial features were unpleasing to the eye. But he was a hero of the book because he was willing to go among the common men in a poor and backward country and help them achieve the simplest advances to improve their living.*

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

Leipzig

PRESUMABLY *for the Communist who has everything, a Leipzig (East Germany) publisher has announced a three-volume edition of "Das Kapital," gilt-edged, bound in parchment and beige-leather, and with spines and cover titles in gold, for seven hundred and seventy marks, or about a hundred and ninety-two dollars.*

THE NEW YORKER

London

IN *Frank Sinatra's desert hide-away in Palm Springs there are books everywhere—in shelves, on ledges, on tables: Simenon, Keats, Kennedy, Ustinov, Shelley, Henry Miller, dictionaries of quotations, books on science, politics, war, and astrology. Magazines, too—Newsweek, Esquire, McCalls, Show Business Illustrated,* ENCOUNTER, *Playboy. He reads insatiably....*

THE QUEEN

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an effective and indispensable instrument for communicating moral and social meanings where understanding is absent and where there is in fact a will not to understand.

Of course we all "suffer' to some degree in punishing, particularly where punishment is extreme, since every act of punishing is in some respect violent, just as we all "suffer" by any imposition of limits, such as with respect to property or marital relations. We can see to it that we suffer more than we need to if we have a will to suffer. But a moral man does not dote on or intensify the suffering, let alone fret about the "even intenser" sufferings of others supposedly suffering empathetically with the punished. For that would serve no other purpose than to prove to oneself or to others how sensitive—not necessarily "morally sensitive"—he is.

ROBERT E. GAHRINGER

Department of Philosophy and Religion,
Hamilton College, Clifton,
New York

NIGEL DENNIS *writes*: I apologise to Professor Gahringer for having upset him so much: will he accept my sincere assurance that I didn't mean what I said? I have tried for many years to find some satisfactory way of satirising capital punishment, but the beastliness of the subject has always beaten me. At last, in 'Hanging Day,' I found what seemed to me a good way of doing the job: instead of showing concern for those that are hanged, I would show it for those that are *not* hanged. Could anything be more selfish and more callous than that? I thought not, but a number of nice people have been very pleased with the article and agree warmly that capital punishment should be abolished because it causes them to suffer so much. As I had not thought that anybody could support such a shameless idea, I must conclude that my satire was a failure.

Corrections

By some oversight, I was not able to see the proofs of my review in your September number. As a consequence of this, three errors crept in which I should like to correct now.

(1) The quotation from Philip Larkin's fine poem, "Ambulances," should read

the solving emptiness
That lies just under all we do.

(2) The poem by Vernon Scannell which I mention is called "My Father's Face," not "My Father's Knee."

(3) The actor who appeared in the B.B.C. "Monitor" production of Peter Redgrove's "Mr. Waterman" was Kenneth Griffiths, not Hugh Griffith.

London ANTHONY THWAITE

AUTHORS

Richard Rees *writes about himself:* "... Although a great deal of my time has been given to literary magazines, my devotion to literature has always been somewhat impure—in the chemical sense. Edited the *Adelphi* in the nineteen-thirties; have worked for the *Twentieth Century*; have published three books and am now working on two more, from one of which a chapter is printed in this number. (*A Theory of My Time* is sub-titled not as autobiography but as 'an essay in didactic reminiscence.' In a short extract the didactic element can unfortunately neither be justified nor completely eliminated, and the reader will perhaps be indulgent enough to bear this in mind if the tone of certain passages seems to require explanation.).... Have also edited a selection of Middleton Murry's criticism and am now preparing a collection of Simone Weil's essays.... I deprecate the view of literature which would make it no more than what Tolstoy called 'a refined lust of the senses' and hold that it is also a field in which spiritual and ethical as well as intellectual and social tendencies can be manifested and meaningfully discussed.... My books have included studies of D. H. Lawrence, Simone Weil, George Orwell, and last but not least, though more briefly, J. D. Salinger...."

J. Robert Oppenheimer, war-time scientific director at Los Alamos, is head of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton, New Jersey....

Michael Hamburger has just edited (together with Christopher Middleton) an anthology, *Modern German Poetry 1910–1960* (MacGibbon & Kee)....

Margaret Shedd is an American writer who lives in Mexico City.

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